Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

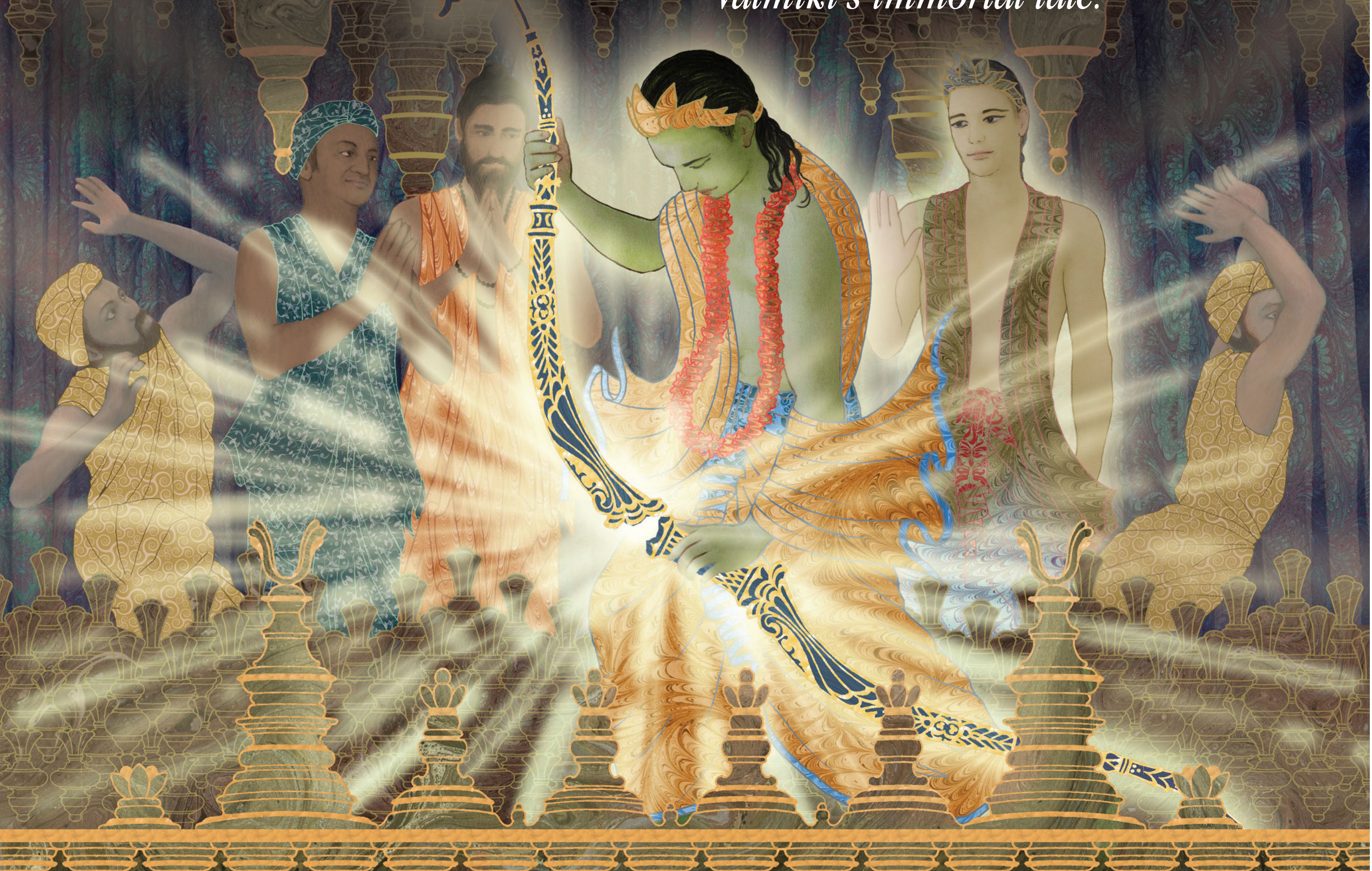
BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • Sep/Oct 2011 • $4.50

Rāmāyaṇa

In New Dress

Fifty new paintings illustrate Vālmīki's immortal tale.



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Founded 1944 • Vol. 45, No. 5 • September / October 2011

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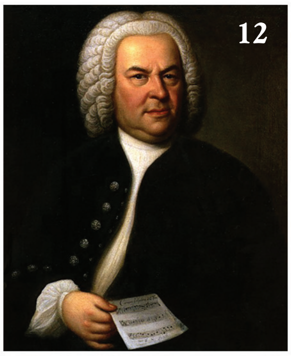
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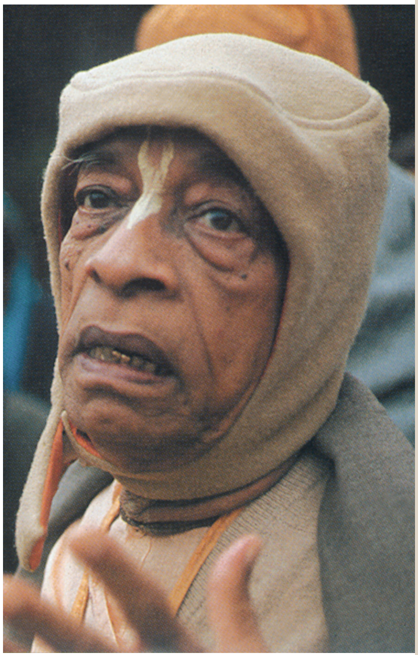
COVER In this illustration from a new edition of the *Rāmāyaṇa,* Lord Rāmacandra easily breaks Lord Śiva's supposedly indestructible bow, winning the hand of Sītā. Please see the *Rāmāyaṇa* excerpt beginning on page 46. (Illustration by Parama Dāsa.)

"We must understand that our natural position is to be conditioned. Now, by whom shall we be conditioned? Kṛṣṇa says, 'Become conditioned by Me; surrender to Me. Then you will be happy.' Those who are thinking, 'We shall not be conditioned' are in māyā *[illusion]."*
—p. 32



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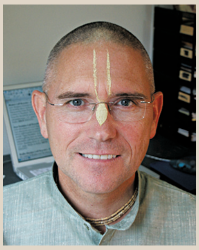


THIS ISSUE presents an excerpt from the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust's new edition of the *Rāmāyaṇa,* India's cherished epic about the activities of Lord Rāmacandra, an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The book showcases the unique art of Italian artist Parama Dāsa. Artists have been painting scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* for centuries, but it's safe to say there have never been *Rāmāyaṇa* paintings quite like these, produced with state-of-the-art computer programs.

Besides extraordinary art, this issue also contains an article that's mostly poetry. Kālakaṇṭha Dāsa's "The Cowherd Men Confused" is a poetic rendition of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastime of lifting Govardhan Hill, which Kṛṣṇa's devotees will commemorate in late October.

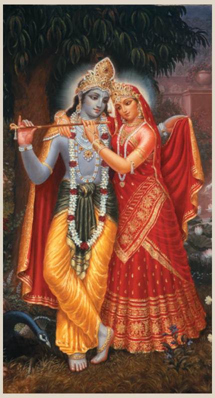
This issue also touches on a musical theme: the use of music in spiritual pursuits. While attending a Bach concert with his brother, Satyarāja Dāsa pondered the spiritual connections of both Western and Vaiṣṇava music. His article "Bach to Godhead: Music and the Vaiṣṇava Tradition" discusses the importance of music in the practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Added to the mix of art, poetry, and music is an excursion into the paranormal, as Caitanya Caraṇa Dāsa explains how near-death experiences point to the existence of the soul.

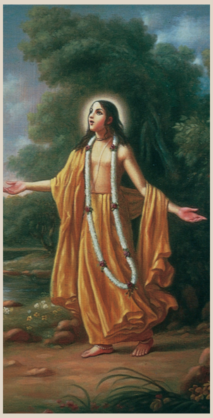
Hare Kṛṣṇa.—*Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor*

OUR PURPOSES

- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God as taught by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.



Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are together the one Supreme Absolute Truth.



Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the combined incarnation of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, inaugurated the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa five hundred years ago.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

BACK TO GODHEAD
*The Magazine of the
Hare Krishna Movement*

FOUNDER (under the direction of His Divine Grace Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda) **His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda** (1896–1977)

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INDIA: **PUBLISHER** Yudhiṣṭhira Dāsa • **PRODUCTION** Sac-cid-ānanda Dāsa, Sundara Rūpa Dāsa • **GENERAL MANAGER & CIRCULATION** Pāṇḍurāṅga Dāsa • **ACCOUNTS** Sahadeva Dāsa • **SUBSCRIBER SERVICES** Mañjarī Devī Dāsī

EDITORIAL OFFICES Send editorial correspondence to BTG, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, FL 32616, USA. Phone: (386) 462-7794. Email: editors@krishna.com. Or BTG, 3rd Floor, 302, Amrut Industrial Estate, Western Express Highway, Mira Rd. (E), Mumbai 401104, India. Phone: (022) 32556701. Email: btgindia@pamho.net

SUBSCRIPTIONS *Back to Godhead* is published six times a year. For a one-year subscription (US and Canada) send $19.95 to BTG, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, FL 32616, USA. Or call toll-free: 1-800-800-3284. For subscriptions outside the US and Canada add $10. Payment in US funds (payable on a US bank) must accompany your order. In the UK send £18.99 to BTG UK Ltd., Bhaktivedanta Manor, Dharam Marg, Hilfield Lane, Watford, Herts. WD2 8EZ. In South Africa send R240 to Back to Godhead, P. O. Box 56003, Chatsworth 4030.

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PREPRESS & PRINTING Interprint, Clearwater, Florida, USA

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CANADA POST AGREEMENT #: 40612608
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Back to Godhead, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, FL 32616.
Canada Returns to be sent to Pitney Bowes, P. O. Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2

Letters

A Brilliant Issue

I'd just like to say how much I enjoyed the May/June edition of *Back to Godhead.* What a brilliant issue! I loved the article by Viśākhā Devī Dāsī about looking after Mother Earth, and also Kṛṣṇa-nandinī Devī Dāsī's article about Vaiṣṇava family love and affection. Then there was "Prabhupāda at the Avalon Ballroom" and "In Vrindavan with a Hundred Foreigners." I do hatha yoga myself, so I particularly could identify with this article.

I am just now looking at the Hare Krishna Tree photos ("Just to Embrace a Tree"), and I wonder what kind of austerities this lovely Vaiṣṇava tree must have performed to have such a history (and present). I thought about Śrīla Prabhupāda chanting and lecturing under this tree for the first time in the West, and I thought about all the Vaiṣṇavas who must hug this tree. Best wishes, and love to all the Vaiṣṇavas.

Bhaktin Jennifer Marigold
Via the Internet

Aspiring Tree Huggers

The next three letters were written to Yugāvatāra Dāsa, author of "Just to Embrace a Tree."

I was reading the devotional article about your visit to the Hare Krishna Tree in New York, under which Śrīla Prabhupāda used to chant. The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement took birth in that most fortunate place. Reading the article in BTG has motivated me to see that fortunate tree. It's inspiring to hear that visiting the tree was your main goal during your trip to the USA. I have gone to New York many times, and have attended the New York Rathayātrā as well, but I never thought of going to see this special tree. Now I will go there for sure and ask for mercy for spiritual progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Millions of thanks for making us all aware of this tree.

Vijaya Kṛṣṇa Dāsa
Via the Internet

I was just reading *Back to Godhead* magazine, and I came across your article "Just to Embrace a Tree." After reading about your experience, I felt so small and heartbroken, because I have been to the USA on many occasions, and although I did visit the Brooklyn temple, I never visited this chanting place of Prabhupāda. I am going to the USA in July, and because of you I am going to visit that park, and I want to hug that tree just like you did.

Dāmodara Priyā Devī Dāsī
Trinidad

When I saw the title "Just to Embrace a Tree," my first thought was, "Wow, someone feels the same as I do about the tree." Your article was written in my favorite style, as a story, in very simple language, yet expressing very high truths.

I like your prayer that you won't mind taking birth as a hippie in order to hear Śrīla Prabhupāda chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. That must have resounded with a lot of people, from India and here in the West. As a former hippie, I was thinking, "You don't know what you're praying for. Culturally it's a giant leap backward." But I understood your mood and appreciated how you had presented it so eloquently. I admit that the article brought tears to my eyes.

Mitrasena Dāsa
Sandy Ridge, North Carolina

What Is "Causeless Mercy"?

We learn in the *Bhagavad-gītā, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* and other Vedic scriptures that everything has a cause. Kṛṣṇa is called "the cause of all causes." The coming of His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda to the West had a cause—the transcendental order of his Guru Mahārāja. Still, it is said that the mercy of guru and Kṛṣṇa is causeless. Even if we accept that the mercy of guru and Kṛṣṇa has no material, karmic cause, it still has a spiritual cause. So why do we speak of causeless mercy?

Jaya Gurudeva Dāsa
Via the Internet

Our reply: The word *causeless* in this context is used to emphasize the fact that the mercy of the Lord and the mercy of His pure devotee are not the product of someone's karmic destiny but the free choice of the person bestowing the mercy. It is also true that mercy is an intrinsic transcendental quality of both the Lord and His pure devotee, and thus not caused by something else. Both the Lord and His devotee are inclined to be merciful, but both the extent and the manner in which this mercy is manifest in a particular situation is the choice of the Lord or His pure devotee, and not caused by anything external. Śrīla Prabhupāda would sometimes make the point that the Vaiṣṇava is not obliged to do anything. For example, he may speak liberally on the Absolute Truth or remain silent, as he chooses.

Guru/Disciple Qualifications

What are the qualifications of a spiritual master and a disciple?

Shreepad Gadre
Via the Internet

Our reply: The qualifications for both are described in several places in our scriptures. For example, the *Upadeśāmṛta* (Text 1), by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, describes that the spiritual master must be able to control the six urges: "A sober person who can tolerate the urge to speak, the mind's demands, the actions of anger, and the urges of the tongue, belly, and genitals is qualified to make disciples all over the world." These qualifications are elaborated on in several places, and Śrīla Prabhupāda often mentions that by the order of Lord Caitanya and the spiritual master, one can become qualified to be a spiritual master as long as one strictly follows the instructions of Lord Caitanya and one's own spiritual master.

As for the qualifications of the disciple, those are described in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.34): Surrender, submissive enquiry, and service.

When the disciple and spiritual master are qualified with these ornaments, then the relationship will bring love of Kṛṣṇa.

The disciple and the spiritual master should examine each other for at least six months to a year to be sure they are right for each other. The disciple must have sufficient faith to submissively follow the order of the spiritual master.

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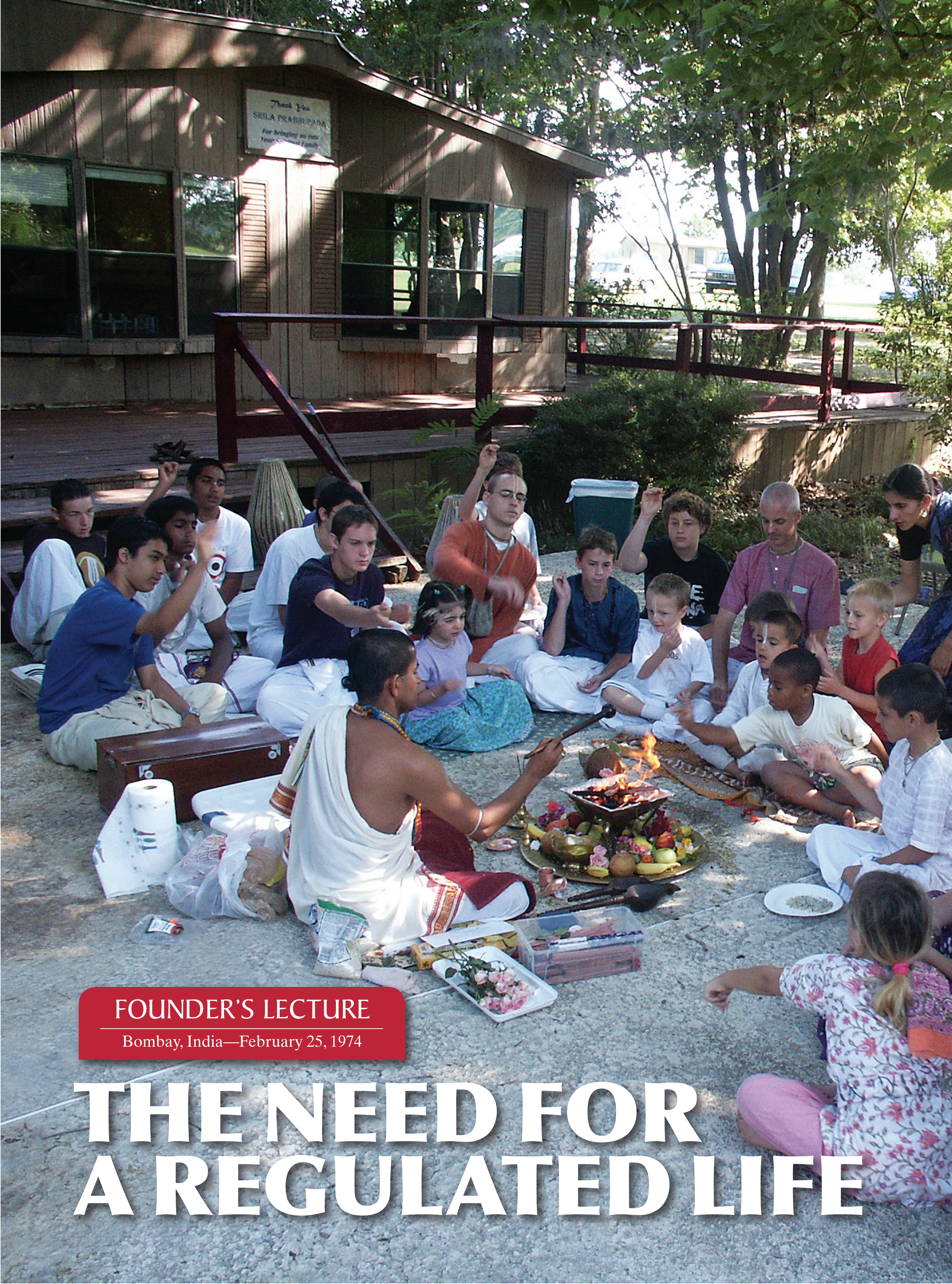
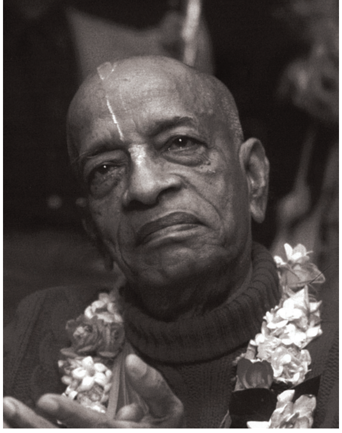

Thank You
SRILA PRABHUPADA
For bringing us into

FOUNDER'S LECTURE

Bombay, India—February 25, 1974

THE NEED FOR A REGULATED LIFE



Satisfying our material needs within
the bounds of scriptural rules
guarantees peace and prosperity for the
individual, the family, and society.

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society
for Krishna Consciousness

---

balaṁ balavatāṁ cāhaṁ
kāma-rāga-vivarjitam
dharmāviruddho bhūteṣu
kāmo 'smi bharatarṣabha

"I am the strength of the strong, devoid of passion and desire. I am sex life which is not contrary to religious principles, O lord of the Bhāratas [Arjuna]."—*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.11

KṚṢṆA IS EXPLAINING everything about how you can become Kṛṣṇa conscious twenty-four hours a day. The one process recommended by Caitanya Mahāprabhu is *kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ:* "Always chant the glories of the Lord." And Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.14),

satataṁ kīrtayanto māṁ
yatantaś ca dṛḍha-vratāḥ
namasyantaś ca māṁ bhaktyā
nitya-yuktā upāsate

"Always chanting My glories, endeavoring with great determination, bowing down before Me, these great souls perpetually worship Me with devotion." These are the symptoms of the *mahātmās,* the great souls. They are always engaged in chanting the holy name.

This is life. Human life is meant for this purpose. We require something to eat because we have this body. But when we use bodily necessities in excessive proportion, that is called *kāma,*

Left: A Vedic fire sacrifice is part of the graduation ceremonies for students of the New Raman Reti School (now the Bhaktivedanta Academy) in Alachua, Florida.

Yamarāja Dāsa

lust. Otherwise, to satisfy the bodily necessities is not *kāma.* Therefore Kṛṣṇa says, *dharmāviruddho bhūteṣu kāmo 'smi bharatarṣabha:* "I am sex life which is not contrary to religious principles." Religion means regulation. Everything has got regulation. In our ordinary life we must get a license to do certain things. Even a man who keeps a wine shop—that is not a good thing—must get a license and submit to regulations.

Śāstra, the Sanskrit word for "scripture," means regulation. It comes from the root *śās,* which means "ruling, controlling." Government rule is *śāsana,* and *śastra* means "weapon."

Śāstra is the regulative principles, the book of laws. You cannot violate the book of laws. You must keep yourself under regulative principles and act according to the *śāstra.*

If we want to make our life perfect, we must follow the regulative principles, like a good citizen who strictly follows the laws of the government.

In the *śāstra* it is stated *jīvo jīvasya jīvanam:* "Every living entity is living by eating another living entity." That is nature. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.13.47) says, "Those who have no hands are food for the animal with hands." Even in the form of a human being, those who are eating animals are also animals. Human beings are *sahastānām,* "with hands." *Hasta* means "hand," and *sa* means "with." And the animals are *ahastāni:* they have no hands. They have only legs, four legs. So those who eat meat are animals, but with hands. That is the difference. Cows, goats, and lambs are animals. Dogs are animals, and there are dog-eaters. *Śva-pacaḥ* means "dog-eaters." Devahūtī, the mother of Lord Kapila, says that a person who chants Hare Kṛṣṇa becomes glorious even if born in a family of dog-eaters. But animal-eaters are described as animals with two hands.

Other animals eat living entities without legs (*apadāni*), like plants, trees, and grass. They have some kind of legs because they are standing, but they have no moving power. They are called *pādapa,* which means they have legs for eating. We are eating with a mouth; they are eating with legs.

The *śāstras* give a minute analytical study of the senses and power of the various living entities. For example, fish have the sense to detect an enemy two miles away. "Somebody's coming to eat me." These things are all described in the *Bhāgavatam.* Frogs can be in *samādhi,* a trancelike state, for many, many years. So to attain *samādhi* through yogic principles is not a very great thing. Even in the animals you will find it. I read long, long ago that in a coalmine, while the workers were digging for coal, a frog came out from the coal and jumped and died. That means the frog was buried within the lump of coal for many, many thousands of years, and he was keeping *samādhi.*

The Wonderful Thing

These are not very extraordinary things, because the living entity is eternal, does not die. *Na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre* [*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.20]. If, by some process, the living entity lives for some extended period, that is not a very wonderful thing. The wonderful thing is stopping birth and death. That I am living, say, for fifty or a hundred years and another man is living for three hundred years—that is not a very wonderful thing.

If we want to make our life perfect, we must follow the regulative principles, like a good citizen who strictly follows the laws of the government. The first-class human being follows the laws of God. That's all. He's first-class. And those who are simply violating the laws of God are third-class, fourth-class, tenth-class. It will be explained a few verses later that those who are simply violating the laws of God are called *duṣkṛtinaḥ,* miscreants. There are so many classes of men, and Kṛṣṇa is mentioning some of them. The *duṣkṛtinaḥ,* who are simply violating the laws of God, cannot come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, God consciousness. One must follow the rules and regulations, the *śāstra.*

Śāstra means that which gives you regulative life. The regulative principle for sex is that even with your wife you cannot have sex unless it is meant for progeny, for producing children—Kṛṣṇa conscious children, not cats and dogs. That is *dharmāviruddhaḥ,* not against religious principles. That is very nice. Unless one marries, how he can beget children who become *brahmacārīs*? So if you produce *brahmacārīs,* then you can produce hundreds of *brahmacārīs.* That is allowed. But don't produce cats and dogs. That is *dharmāviruddhaḥ.* Kṛṣṇa says, "I am there."

Kṛṣṇa is everything. Even in sexual intercourse Kṛṣṇa is there. But how? *Dharmāviruddhaḥ:* when it is not against the laws of *śāstra.* In the *śāstra* it is said that you can have sex after the menstrual period. But when your wife becomes pregnant, no more sex life. This is the injunction of the *śāstra.* You cannot have sex for producing illegitimate children, *varṇa-saṅkara.* When the world becomes full of *varṇa-saṅkara,* unwanted children, the whole world becomes hell. This is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā.*

I have seen, especially in the Western countries, that girls are not married but they have children. In this way *varṇa-saṅkara* increases, and the world becomes hellish. Why so much trouble now? Because the whole population is *varṇa-saṅkara,* and therefore there are no regulative principles.

If you follow regulative principles, there is no problem. The regulative principles are given by Kṛṣṇa. *Dharmaṁ tu sākṣād bhagavat-praṇītam* [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.3.19]. He's giving. And He's saying, "I am sex life according to regulative principles." So there is Kṛṣṇa consciousness even in begetting children, provided you follow the regulative principles.

Everything Is Spiritual

Everything can be employed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I was explaining to George [Harrison] that actually there is nothing material. Everything is spiritual. As Kṛṣṇa is explaining from the very beginning:

bhūmir āpo 'nalo vāyuḥ
khaṁ mano buddhir eva ca
ahaṅkāra itīyaṁ me
bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā

"Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence, and false ego—all together these eight constitute My separated material energies. [*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.4] *Prakṛti* means "My nature." Kṛṣṇa is not separate from His nature, just as smoke is not separate from fire. This material nature is coming from Kṛṣṇa, so how can you separate it from Kṛṣṇa? It is also Kṛṣṇa. That vision is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If a man sees *bhūmi,* land, and immediately remembers, "This is Kṛṣṇa's nature," then he remembers Kṛṣṇa. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness—even by seeing land you remember Kṛṣṇa.

The devotee sees like that. "Oh, this land is so nice. Why not construct a nice temple for Kṛṣṇa?" This is Kṛṣna conscious vision. "Oh, there are so many skyscrapers. Why not construct a nice skyscraper temple of Kṛṣṇa?" That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

As soon as you become Kṛṣṇa conscious, you become spiritual. If you put an iron rod in the fire, it becomes warm, warmer, warmer, then it becomes red-hot. And when it is red-hot, it is no longer an iron rod; it is fire. Whatever you touch with it will burn. Similarly, if you become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious, there is nothing material. Your body is spiritual, your mind is spiritual, your soul is already spiritual—everything is spiritual. *Sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma.* That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

We simply have to bring Kṛṣṇa into every activity. Then there will be no problems. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is meant for that purpose. Kṛṣṇa says,

yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi
yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya
tat kuruṣva mad-arpaṇam

"Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer or give away, and whatever austerities you perform—do that, O son of Kuntī, as an offering to Me. [*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.27]. Kṛṣṇa says, "Whatever you eat . . ." We are eating *prasādam.* Others, who have no Kṛṣṇa consciousness, will see, "They are eating *ḍāla-bhāta* [rice and lentils], and they are calling it *prasādam.*" One who has Kṛṣṇa consciousness eats *ḍāla-bhāta,* but it is not *ḍāla-bhāta.* It is spiritualized, because it is offered to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa has eaten it.

Kṛṣna's Eating

Kṛṣṇa eats what His devotees offer Him. Don't think, "The food is still there. Kṛṣṇa has not eaten." No, Kṛṣṇa has eaten. But Kṛṣṇa's eating and your eating are different. If I give you something to eat, you'll finish the whole thing. But Kṛṣṇa is *pūrṇa,* the complete whole, so He can eat without taking the food away. Otherwise, is He speaking falsely? He says,

patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyaṁ
yo me bhaktyā prayacchati
tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam
aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ

What Is the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement?

Founded in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) carries on a great ancient tradition rooted in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the teachings Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke five millennia ago. The *Gītā* and the other Vedic scriptures declare Kṛṣṇa to be the original person, God Himself, who appears periodically in this world to liberate all living beings.

Only five hundred years ago, Kṛṣṇa descended as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach the most sublime and effective means of meditation for the present day: the chanting of the names of God, especially as found in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

Today members of ISKCON continue Lord Caitanya's movement by distributing the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra all over the world.

Pronunciation

We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in b**u**t, long **ā** like the **a** in f**a**r (and held twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in ev**a**de, long **ī** like the **i** in p**i**que. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **ri**m, and **c** like the **ch** in **ch**air. Pronounce consonants like **ch**, **jh**, and **dh** as in staun**ch-h**eart, hed**ge-hog**, and re**d-h**ot. Pronounce **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh**. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

Spiritual Names

ISKCON members receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or his great devotees, combined with Dāsa, for men, or Dāsī, for women, both of which mean "servant." For instance, the name Kṛṣṇa Dāsa means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

"If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit, or water, I will accept it." [*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.26] He eats.

A friend who belongs to the Arya-samaj asked me, "You are offering food to Kṛṣṇa in the temple, but does Kṛṣṇa eat?"

"Certainly He eats. Why not?"

"No, the things are still there, so how has He eaten?"

"Why are you equating your eating and Kṛṣṇa's eating?"

Kṛṣṇa says,

avajānanti māṁ mūḍhā
mānuṣīṁ tanum āśritam
paraṁ bhāvam ajānanto
mama bhūta-maheśvaram

If you want to know Kṛṣṇa *tattvataḥ,* then you have to go through this *bhakti* process, not your speculative process.

"Fools deride Me when I descend in the human form. They do not know My transcendental nature as the Supreme Lord of all that be." [*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.11]. Rascals do not know what Kṛṣṇa is. They think, "Kṛṣṇa is like me." They do not know what Kṛṣṇa is. Why?

manuṣyāṇāṁ sahasreṣu
kaścid yatati siddhaye
yatatām api siddhānāṁ
kaścin māṁ vetti tattvataḥ

"Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavor for perfection, and of those who have achieved perfection, hardly one knows Me in truth." [*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.3] Rascals do not know Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa can be known by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa.

bhaktyā mām abhijānāti
yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ
tato māṁ tattvato jñātva
viśate tad-anantaram

"One can understand Me as I am, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, only by devotional service. And when one is in full consciousness of Me by such devotion, he can enter into the kingdom of God." [*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.55]. If you want to know Kṛṣṇa *tattvataḥ*—in truth—then you have to go through this *bhakti* process, not your speculative process.

Kṛṣṇa is not open to your sensual gratification. He cannot be revealed to anyone and everyone. He's covered. At night we cannot see the sun. That does not mean the sun is not in the sky. If somebody thinks, "Now we cannot see the sun; therefore the sun is gone, dead," that is foolishness.

Kṛṣṇa is everywhere, just as the sun is always there in the sky. Now, here it is half-past eight, and in America it is half-past eight in the morning, and they can see the sun there. It is now night in India, and people cannot see the sun, but that does not mean the sun is finished. If you go to America, to Los Angeles, you'll see the sun. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa is always present. You simply have to prepare your eyes to see Kṛṣṇa.

Therefore Kṛṣṇa says, *dharmāviruddho bhūteṣu kāmo 'smi bharatarṣabha:* "I am sex that is not against the regulative principles." One who is strictly following the regulative principles can see Kṛṣṇa even in sex life. From the spiritual point of view, sex is considered abominable, but even in sex life, if you are following the rules and regulations, you can see Kṛṣṇa. And children begotten with that vision become devotees of Kṛṣṇa.

Reformative Measures

According to Hindu principles there are ten *saṁskāras,* reformative measures. When a man is going to make his wife pregnant, there is a *saṁskāra,* a ceremony, called *garbhādhāna-saṁskāra.* And especially in the *brāhmaṇa* families, if there is no *garbhādhāna-saṁskāra* the child immediately becomes a *śūdra,* or of low spiritual status. This is the śāstric injunction. You must follow the *saṁskāras.* One who follows the *saṁskāras* becomes purified. This is *dharmāviruddhaḥ,* "not against the religious principles."

If we do not follow the principles, then we are animals. That's all. That is the difference between an animal and a human being.

Because people do not follow the śāstric injunction regarding sex, they are thinking, "The population is increasing; let us use the contraceptive method." The so-called contraceptive method is there because we are having sex against religion. But if you have sex in pursuance of the religious principles, you don't require contraception. You are not restricted from becoming a father or a mother. That is nature. You can become the father of hundreds children. But don't produce cats and dogs, because then there will be unwanted population, problems, fighting, no peace, no tranquility. Everything will be hell.

Because people are producing children against religious principles, the whole world is full of *varṇa-saṅkara,* and there is no peace. If you follow the principles of *Bhagavad-gītā,* automatically there will be peace, because every child will be sober, Kṛṣṇa conscious. Therefore *śāstra* says that you should not become a father or mother if you cannot stop the course of birth and death of your children. This is called religious contraceptive.

The real soul, the real life, is within the body, and he's transmigrating from one body to another. That is called death. And when he comes out from another body, that is called birth. As soon as you get another body, you are again put into a miserable condition of life. Therefore if you can stop your children's birth and death, then beget children. This

(*please turn to page 26*)

Glossary

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Ācārya—a spiritual master who teaches by example.

Balarāma—Lord Kṛṣṇa's first expansion, who acts in the role of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother.

Battle of Kurukshetra—an epic battle for rule of the world, fought five thousand years ago.

Bhagavad-gītā—the sacred book in which Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the essence of knowledge to His friend and disciple Arjuna. (Cited as Bg.)

Bhakti—devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura—the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Bhakti-yoga—linking with the Supreme Lord through devotional service.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu—the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared five hundred years ago to teach the chanting of the names of God as the religion for the present age.

Darśana—"viewing," audience with a deity or saintly person.

Dharma—(1) ordained duties or religious principles; (2) one's eternal, natural occupation (i.e., devotional service to the Lord).

Godhead—the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Reality, progressively realized first as the impersonal all-pervasive oneness, more fully as the Supersoul within the heart of every living being, and ultimately as the all-opulent Supreme Person.

Gurukula—a school where children learn the philosophy and practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness along with regular academic subjects (literally "the place of the guru").

Hare Kṛṣṇa—the great mantra Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

ISKCON—the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Japa—individual chanting of names of God, usually while counting on beads.

Kali-yuga—in the endlessly repeated cycle of four cosmic ages, the present and worst age, the Age of Quarrel, of which 5,000 of 432,000 years have passed.

Karma—material action; its inevitable reaction; or the law by which such action and reaction are governed.

Kīrtana—congregational singing of names of God, usually accompanied by cymbals (*karatālas*) and drums (*mṛdaṅgas*).

Kṛṣṇa—the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His original transcendental form (see "Godhead").

Mahābhārata—the epic history of ancient India, a history in which the *Bhagavad-gītā* appears as the most important and well-known text.

Māyā—illusion; the energy of the Supreme Lord that deludes living entities into forgetting their spiritual nature and forgetting God.

Māyāvādī—one who regards the Absolute Truth as ultimately impersonal.

Modes of nature—the three qualities (goodness, passion, and ignorance) that hold sway over all action in the material world.

Nityānanda—the incarnation of Lord Balarāma who appeared with Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Prasādam—vegetarian food that has been prepared for the Lord and offered to Him with devotion.

Purāṇas—Vedic histories.

Rādhārāṇī—Lord Kṛṣṇa's consort and pleasure potency.

Rathayātrā—"chariot festival": a festival in which the form of Kṛṣṇa is borne in procession on a large canopy-topped chariot or float, especially the festival originating in Puri, India, for Jagannātha (Lord Kṛṣṇa, "the Lord of the universe").

Sannyāsa—the renounced life of a man who relinquishes home to dedicate himself fully to the Supreme.

Śāstra—scriptures, especially the Vedic scriptures of India.

Śrī—an honorific meaning "opulent" (similarly: Śrīla, Śrīmad, Śrīmān, Śrīmatī).

Śrīla Prabhupāda—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the most important of the eighteen *Purāṇas,* which tells of the nature and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

Supersoul—the form of the Lord who resides in every heart along with the individual soul.

Vaiṣṇava—a devotee of the Supreme Lord (from the word *Viṣṇu*).

Varṇāśrama—the Vedic social system. It organizes society into four occupational and four spiritual divisions (*varṇas* and *āśramas*). The members of the four *varṇas* are the *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals and priests), the *kṣatriyas* (administrators and soldiers), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and businessmen), and the *śūdras* (laborers and artisans). The members of the four *āśramas* are the *brahmacārīs* (celibate students), *gṛhasthas* (married people), *vānaprasthas* (retired people), and *sannyāsīs* (renunciants).

Vedas—the hymns of knowledge revealed by the Lord Himself at the beginning of creation.

Vedic—pertaining to the culture in which the *Vedas* and related scriptures guide all aspects of human life.

Viṣṇu—any form of the Personality of Godhead (see "Godhead"); the forms the Lord manifests to create and sustain the material world.

Vṛndāvana—the transcendental abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, mirrored on earth as the town in India where Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago.

"I am the sound in ether."—Lord Kṛṣṇa, Bhagavad-gītā 7.8

BACH to Go

Music and the Vaiṣṇava Tradition

MY ELDER BROTHER had tickets to a "Bach Retrospective" and invited me along. I had just read a book on the famed composer's life, and I looked at this as an opportunity to get together with a dear sibling I see far too seldom.

Bach was born in Germany in the winter of 1685 and grew up to be an evangelical Lutheran Christian. He took great pleasure in composing songs based on the Bible. Since his work stands at the pinnacle of Western civilization, I was heartened to read that much of it is based on religion and spirituality.

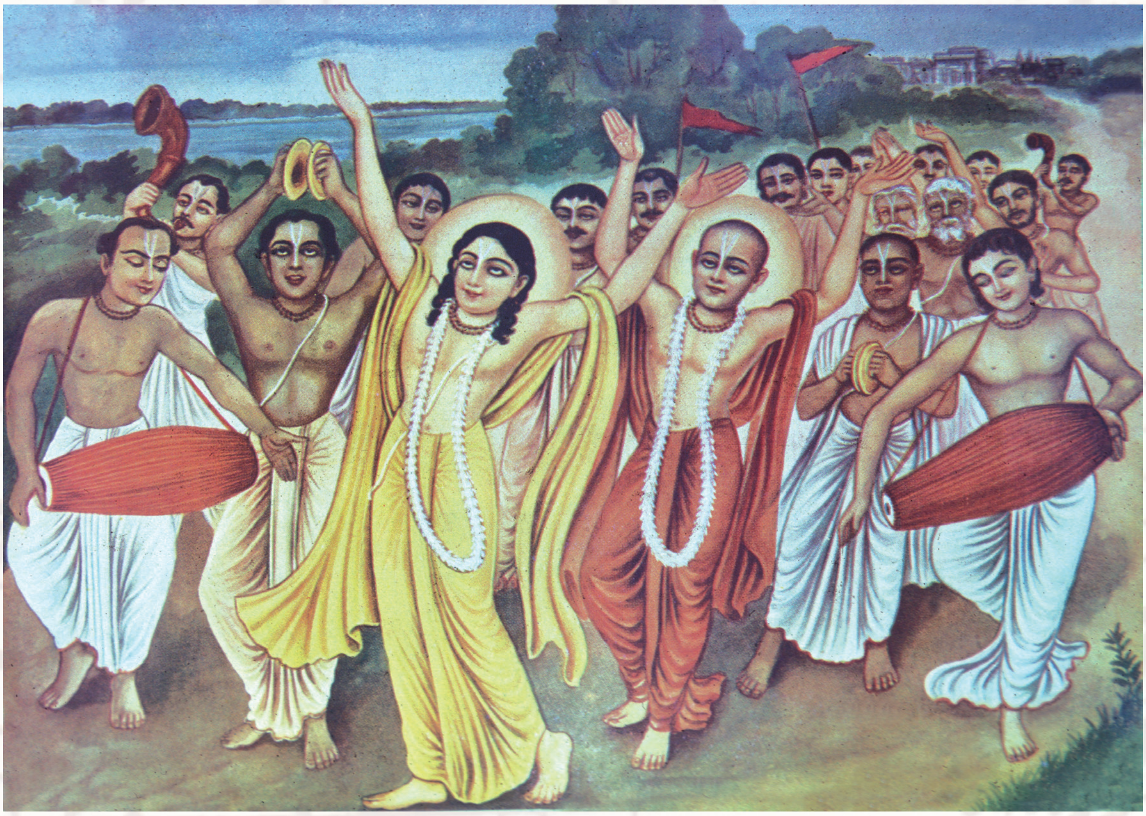
The program guide contained quotes from other musical geniuses, showing that they too were engulfed in spiritual consciousness.

Beethoven wrote, "Music is the mediator between intellectual and sensuous life . . . the one spiritual entrance into the higher world."

"Music praises God," said Stravinsky. "Music is well or better able to praise Him than the building of a church with all its decoration; music is the church's greatest ornament."

Many of the world's best musicians during the classical period of Western music were devoted to God. Perhaps it was the religious emphasis of the time. One can sense that the more prominent musicians saw music, like everything else, as a gift, an asset to be used in the Lord's service.

As we entered the concert hall, I just had to share an idea with my brother. I suggested that the joyous feelings awakened through music, hymns, and melodious glorification of God are a kind of sonic theology, in which

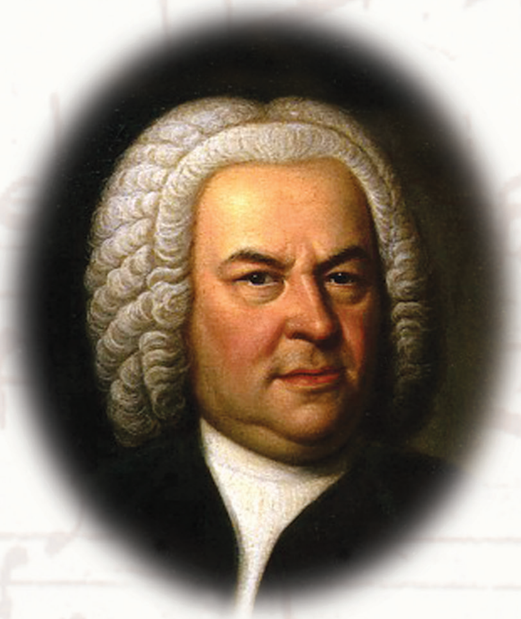


J. S. Bach was music director of Nikolaikirche (St. Nicholas Church) in Leipzig, Germany (right). At left, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu chants the holy names with His associates.

Portrait of Bach by Elias Gottlob Haussmann

dhead

By Satyarāja Dāsa



both performer and audience can understand the Divine in ways difficult to apprehend through other means. Like most others at the venue, however, my brother was naturally more interested in listening to music than in philosophizing about it.

I said a few words about using music as a device for spiritual advancement. He gave me a big "*shhh!*" and we proceeded to search out our seats.

I started thinking about my own adopted tradition, Vaiṣṇavism, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I remembered reading that many of the verses of the *Sāma Veda* are merely those of the *Ṛg Veda* but with more melodious meters. I also thought about the writings of the Vedic sages and how Sanskrit texts, as well as Bengali texts from the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition, employ various meters and melodies. All divine words are like songs, our Vaiṣṇava tradition tells us.

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "Actually, the world is full of Kṛṣṇa's singing, but it is appreciated in different ways by different kinds of living entities."

Higher beings mentioned in the Vedic literature are often musicians. The goddess Sarasvatī and the celestial sage Nārada both play the *vīṇā* (Indian lute). Lord Śiva elegantly performs his cosmic dance at the end of time while playing on his *dindin* drum. And Kṛṣṇa charms His purest devotees with the mellifluous notes of His magical flute and the sweetness of His voice. As Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in *Kṛṣṇa: The Supreme Personality of Godhead* (Chapter 33), "Actually, the whole world is full of Kṛṣṇa's singing, but it is appreciated in different ways by different kinds of living entities."

From the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.12.47) we learn that Lord Brahmā produced the original seven notes of music, which he used to create the universe. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in his purport:

> The musical notes are *ṣa, ṛ, gā, ma, pa, dha,* and *ni.* All these vibrations are originally called *śabda-brahma,* or spiritual sound. . . . In the ultimate issue there is nothing material because everything has its origin in the spiritual world. The material manifestation is . . . therefore called illusion in the proper sense of the term. For those who are realized souls there is nothing but spirit.

These last two sentences are particularly significant: While all sound is ultimately spiritual—and an evolved student of spiritual sciences can readily perceive this—gradations exist for those of us not so advanced. Some sounds can drag us further into illusion.

As I thought about this, I temporarily lost my train of thought, letting in the external awareness of the Bach compositions being performed before me. I wondered how these sounds would fare with Śrīla Prabhupāda, a pure devotee, who could feel their true spiritual vibrations—would he say that these sounds are purifying, bringing me closer to Kṛṣṇa, or not?

Bach generated the sounds in pursuit of God, as he deeply wanted to know his creator, to see Him, to feel Him. So I was sure these sounds were more uplifting than, say, screeching rock or rap, which usually focus on mundane concerns, with reverberations that come from passion and, often, torment. Still, even if Bach's music is comparatively spiritual, or at least reflecting some sort of goodness, how much could it be counted upon to bring one to the ultimate destination? Just how pure is it?

Vaiṣṇava Music

My mind returned to Vaiṣṇava music. The principle in Vaiṣṇavism is to use music to please the Lord and to help one advance in spiritual perfection. It is not art for art's sake—or music for music's sake. It is music for God's sake. Therefore, true spiritual music, from the Vaiṣṇava point of view, must be grounded in devotional principles. It must arise from purity, transport its listeners to purity, and end up increasing one's purity. Ideally, it should be free from ego or ostentatious displays of virtuosity. It focuses instead on enhancing one's mood of service to God, on generating love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

This thought brought Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa-līlā* to mind. According to the *Bhakti-ratnākara,* a seventeenth-century Bengali scripture, the origin of Vaiṣṇava music is indeed this beloved Round Dance of the Lord, where Kṛṣṇa and His cowherd girlfriends, the *gopīs,* use numerous musical instruments to accompany their many songs of love.

The *Bhakti-ratnākara's* Fifth Wave (chapter) begins with a lengthy section focusing on Vaiṣṇava music. It explains the intricacies of how to glorify God with various melodies and instruments, ultimately telling us that *kīrtana,* the congregational chanting devotees engage in to this day, is the height of musical experience, employing tonal and polytonal rhythms (*tāla*), established melodic formats (*rāga*), gestures of emotional expression (*abhinaya*), and even dancing (*nāṭyam*). These were all used in the *rāsa-līlā.*

For devotees, music necessarily becomes embodied in *kīrtana,* the most important form of music because it is a hundred percent focused on glorifying God. The

(*please turn to page 26*)

A HARE KṚṢṆA IN THE STOCK MARKET

A life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness threatens a young man's promising financial future.

By Ānanda Vṛndāvana Dāsa

(As told to Vraja Vihārī Dāsa)

I WAS BORN in December 1962 to a well-to-do Gujarati family in Mumbai. I was the only son and was pampered with comforts and servants who attended to my beck and call. My wealthy businessman father was deeply religious; two of India's most popular gurus were the spiritual guides of our family. Each of them had millions of followers, and more than a hundred thousand people attended the public lecture programs of these influential spiritual leaders. Since my father was close to them, our family was happy to serve them and their followers. As a child, I was an object of their affection, and due to

Above: The author with his wife, Tulasī Devī Dāsī, and son, Raghunath.

a spiritual atmosphere at home, I was attracted to hearing and chanting Kṛṣṇa's holy names and pastimes.

I also excelled in my studies. In 1981 I stood first among 300,000 students appearing for the sales-management exam conducted by the London Chamber of Commerce. The Bombay Chamber of Commerce honored me for being the first Indian in a hundred years and the youngest in the world—as a nineteen-year-old—to bag this prestigious gold medal. After securing seven post-graduate management degrees by 1985, I was all set to take over my father's business. Meanwhile, as my own career in the stock market flourished, I underwent an unforgettable experience.

The Spark Becomes a Flame

In 1989 my M.B.A. classmate and friend Dilip Upponi took me to an ISKCON temple in South Mumbai to hear a discourse by His Holiness Rādhānātha Swami, who described Vṛndāvana and Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in great detail. His class fanned the spark of attraction for Kṛṣṇa I already had in my heart. I became irresistibly attracted to Rādhānātha Swami and began to attend more of his classes. Dilip then gave me books written by Śrīla Prabhupāda, the guru of Rādhānātha Swami and the founder of ISKCON. The combination of Rādhānātha Swami's lectures and Śrīla Prabhupāda's books had a mesmerizing effect on me. I was stunned to read in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books that the highest expression of religion is when a devotee approaches God without any desire except to serve and please Him. I was fascinated by Śrīla Prabhupāda's explanation of pure devotional service, where a devotee aspires to be free from the selfish desires of seeking name, fame, prestige, or position in the material world. Instead, a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Prabhupāda explained, only wants to satisfy Kṛṣṇa's senses. This profound depth of Kṛṣṇa consciousness attracted my heart like nothing I had heard or read before.

I was also attached to my father's two gurus and wondered if I was being disloyal to them by coming to ISKCON. My heart pulled me closer to Śrīla Prabhupāda and his sincere followers, who were teaching essentially the same things my parents and family gurus had been teaching. Yet I found Śrīla Prabhupāda and Rādhānātha Swami urging me to take my devotional service a step higher—to offer my whole existence to God without expecting anything in return.

Meanwhile I saw my friend Dilip move into the temple as a full-time resident devotee (an ashram member). The Kṛṣṇa conscious wisdom, the simple and austere lifestyle of Dilip and his colleagues at the ashram, and the loving dealings and relationships that Rādhānātha Swami shared with all devotees won my heart. Deciding to commit to the path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I took spiritual initiation from Rādhānātha Swami and received the name Ānanda Vṛndāvana Dāsa, while my friend Dilip became Devāmṛta Dāsa. However, my innocent hopes of living a happy life centered on Kṛṣṇa and devotees was soon to be challenged.

Family Relationships Strained

Since Rādhānātha Swami was born in America, my conservative, orthodox father was outraged at my decision to accept initiation from someone who wasn't born in India and was from another race. My father claimed the organization I was connecting to was dubious. He wanted me to take initiation from one of his gurus. Although I was now officially connected to Śrīla Prabhupāda and ISKCON, I still had deep love for both our family gurus, and I assured my father I would continue to serve them. But he insisted I reject the American guru and accept an Indian guru. My

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frantic attempts to pacify my family failed, and even my friends and relatives were deeply anguished at my decision.

While everyone protested and discouraged me from attending ISKCON programs, I became firmer in my resolve to pursue my inner calling. My father had trained me to pursue a pious life, but with mounting pressure I sensed him becoming distanced from me. I could feel his pain, but I felt helpless. Our relationship became strained.

During this time I was working as a research analyst with *Capital Market,* India's leading finance magazine. My father thought my prestigious job and my pride in my own abilities were making me rebellious. He tried convincing my employer that I had been brainwashed and was associating with a dangerous cult. My father hoped that if my company would threaten or fire me, I might buckle under pressure and revert to the family ways. My employer, being highly appreciative of my professional expertise, assured my father that I was all right and had become an invaluable asset to the company. Exasperated, my father issued an ultimatum: If I didn't give up associating with ISKCON, I would be deprived of our family fortune. In my youthful frenzy, I responded to the threat by claiming I didn't want any of his wealth.

Exasperated, my father issued an ultimatum: If I didn't give up associating with ISKCON, I would be deprived of our family fortune.

Leaving the Comforts of Family

Although I was doing well in my job, I was young and had no experience of staying alone without servants attending to me. I sensed that if my father were to kick me out of our home, my life would be difficult. But I was determined to pursue Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

My father was unrelenting, and I didn't budge either. One evening, after yet another confrontation, I left home and angrily vowed never to return. I sought to one day prove to him that I could amass a lot of wealth on my own. The devotees at Mumbai ISKCON encouraged me to stay at the temple rather than live alone. As I daily commuted from the temple to the office, I began to find the lifestyle at the ISKCON ashram tough. The living conditions were meager and austere. Accustomed to living with plenty of comforts, I struggled.

Meanwhile, my friend Devāmṛta Dāsa, who had relinquished a flourishing career as a manager with a multinational bank, was dedicating himself to the cause of Kṛṣṇa consciousness as a full-time ISKCON member. One day he asked me to withdraw his life's savings from the bank. I brought him the huge sum of money, and right in front of me he put all of it in the temple donation box. I was shocked to see him give away all of his wealth to the temple and prefer to live as a poor monk. I was from a business family, and although I had seen many religious people, I had never before seen someone so materially qualified give up his wealth and fortune for the service of God. I sensed my relationship with him was now changing. He was no longer just a friend; rather, he now became my spiritual mentor and guide, and I trusted his character. A new surge of determination flooded my heart, and I increased my commitment to pursue Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The love and care I received from the devotees at the temple, the power of pure Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy, and the joy I felt in hearing and chanting Kṛṣṇa's names helped me take the bold steps to leave home.

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy convinced me that the stock market is beset with anxiety borne out of gambling. I vowed never to gamble in stocks. I invested only in safe long-term securities and bonds. In my last twenty-five years in the stock market, I never once did short-term or daily trading, lest I get implicated in the complexities of this volatile market.

At *Capital Market* my professional skill as a research analyst and an advisor on stock market fluctuations helped many clients become millionaires, while my company earned a handsome brokerage. I took no money out of the profits my company or clients earned from risky short-term investments, for this was against my principle and vow that I had taken of "no gambling." After my stint with *Capital Market,* I worked for eighteen years as a partner with J.G. Shah & Co., a brokerage firm ranked fifth in the Bombay Stock Exchange. Despite being a partner in the firm, by the Lord's grace not once did I succumb to any gambling-like transaction.

The Greed for Money

I bought a small house in the suburbs of Mumbai, and Rādhānātha Swami arranged for me to marry a devout girl from the temple congregation. As my father had removed my name from the family inheritance, I felt a need to earn more money. A friend and former business partner of mine proposed a scheme that would make us millionaires overnight. The offer had legal discrepancies, however, and could lead to complications later. My friend dismissed my apprehension and assured me it was a foolproof plan. With our combined financial know-how we could take this enterprise to new heights. The temptation was difficult to resist; I could now prove to my father that I could be wealthier than he was, and didn't need any of his goodwill or inheritance. I also thought I could use my increased wealth to serve Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. The temple needed funds. I was all set to join the business, but first I needed to ask my friend Devāmṛta Dāsa.

He patiently heard my story but didn't share my enthusiasm.

"Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead," he said, "and He will provide whatever we need. We don't need illegal money. That won't be pleasing to Kṛṣṇa."

I was caught in the sea of confusion. On the one hand, the wave of my partner's attractive offer pulled me. I could make it big and once and for all silence all my critics, including my father. On the other hand, a devotee of Kṛṣṇa was asking me to refrain. After weeks of being tossed by conflicting thoughts and feelings, I finally made the painful decision: I withdrew from the plan. My partner expressed shock at my "foolishness." But I was now firm in my choice to live by the wisdom of Kṛṣṇa's devotees.

I have vowed to never enter the stock market without first completing my sixteen rounds of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa on my prayer beads.

A year later my erstwhile partner invited me to a business conference in a leading five-star hotel. By now he was a multi-millionaire and a business star, adored by the media. As cameras flashed and reporters interviewed him, I stood in a corner and watched his quick ascension to the hall of fame and success. At the end of the conference he called me over and rebuked me.

"You fool," he said. "You could have had this success. It's still not too late. My invitation is on. Trust me, I'm your friend. With your intelligence, you could be twice as wealthy as me."

I heard him patiently but wasn't tempted. I was now deeply attached to devotees and the Kṛṣṇa conscious way of life. My earnings were sufficient to keep our family content. My wife, Tulasī Devī Dāsī, and son, Raghunath, supported my Kṛṣṇa conscious values and spiritual practices and abhorred the greed-impelled pursuit of wealth. I left the meeting unruffled, yet disappointed at my inability to convince my friend to abandon his dangerous ways.

A few days later, yet another reality hit me.

The headlines of all the national newspapers and television channels carried the story of one of the three biggest financial scams India had ever witnessed. My former friend was exposed in a fifty-billion-rupee fraud, and his photograph flashed all over. He was now in jail, condemned by the media, government, and police, and charged with over a hundred serious financial crimes. As I followed the news carefully, I realized how Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the association of devotees had saved me. Had it not been for my devotee friend Devāmṛta Dāsa, I too would be languishing in prison today. Kṛṣṇa had saved me by sending me His loving devotees as my friends and saviors.

Learning the Lessons of Life

Over the last two decades of practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness and seeing the swinging fortunes of the volatile financial markets, I have learned valuable lessons in spiritual life. Strong hearing and chanting have sustained me over the last two decades. I have vowed to never enter the stock market without first completing my sixteen rounds of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa on my prayer beads. I also first hear one spiritual lecture on my iPod or at the temple, and only then do I enter my business arena. These practices have given me the strength from within to resist temptations and make the right decisions.

Another lesson I've learned is the value of the association of saintly devotees. I have observed that devotees in the renounced order are blissful even without having money. In stark contrast, I saw people in the stock market earning up to 200,000 rupees daily, yet they were miserable and needed to take sleeping pills. This convinced me that money is not the source of happiness.

This realization also helped me say no to the tempting offers of some business entrepreneurs who wanted to share fifty percent of their profits with me if I would offer them advice on daily stock trading. They even assured me they would bear any losses, while I only needed to offer my intuitive stock-market sense to help them. I've rejected these offers because they are open gambling and injurious to my spiritual health.

Present Services

I presently own an investment company that helps people manage their portfolios by investing in secure mutual funds and government bonds. Recently our firm won the first prize among ten thousand firms in Mumbai for excellence in managing hybrid funds, a category of mutual funds. The Wealth Forum, which monitors mutual funds in western India, conferred upon me the runner-up title for Financial Advisor of the Year.

As a service to the growing temple congregation, a few of us have also started a small bank, Yamuna Kinara. Our team of financially astute devotees offers other devotees a better interest rate on their deposits than the market rates. And on loans taken from the bank, we charge a lesser rate than the prevailing market rates. These lower interest loans are given primarily to financially challenged devotees from the community, and the bank's exclusive motive is to serve the Vaiṣṇavas.

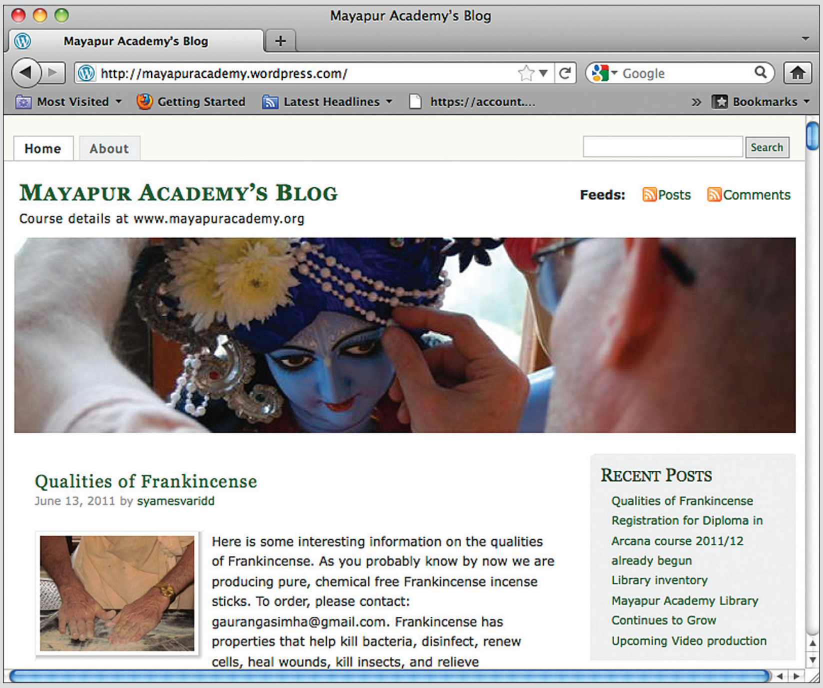
My spiritual master gave us the vision that sincere practicing devotees shouldn't have to face difficulty in their Kṛṣṇa conscious practice due to financial or other worldly problems. Over the last four years this nonprofit service has given me immense satisfaction. I am using my skills in the service of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

I also haven't forgotten the childhood affection of my family. I daily remember and offer prayers and thanks to my father and his gurus. They showed me the path of devotional service. I am forever indebted to my friend Devāmṛta Dāsa, who has now taken the vows of *sannyāsa,* or lifelong celibacy, and is known as Bhakti Rasāmṛta Swami.

My realizations can be summed up in one sentence: Life is a struggle, but it is a happy struggle if we can remember Kṛṣṇa and be attached to hearing and chanting His holy names in the association of His loving devotees.

e-Krishna

Profiles of Kṛṣṇa-related websites



MAYAPUR ACADEMY'S BLOG

Course details at www.mayapuracademy.org

Qualities of Frankincense

June 13, 2011 by syamesvaridd

Here is some interesting information on the qualities of Frankincense. As you probably know by now we are producing pure, chemical free Frankincense incense sticks. To order, please contact: gaurangasimha@gmail.com. Frankincense has properties that help kill bacteria, disinfect, renew cells, heal wounds, kill insects, and relieve

RECENT POSTS

- Qualities of Frankincense
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www.mayapuracademy.wordpress.com is the official blog of the Mayapur Academy, a joint initiative of the Mayapur Deity Department and the ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry. The purpose of the Mayapur Academy is to train devotees in deity worship to help fill the needs of ISKCON communities around the world.

The blog allows you to take a look at the day-to-day activities of the Academy through reports provided by administrators and students. Here's a sample by student Bhaktin Mandakini.

"Three weeks ago I finished up my deity dressing assessment. Kūrma Caitanya Prabhu was very strict at grading my final dressing—fair, but strict. He is tremendously serious when it comes to pleasing their Lordships and expects others to be the same. . . . I also finished another segment: cooking. I needed to make two subjees [vegetable preparations], rice, chutney, dahl, chapatis, salad, a sweet, and a drink. The day before my test, my father and I cooked the whole meal at home so I could practice; it turned out delicious, and I went in the next day confident that I could please the Lord and His devotees with my meal. Everyone who tried my dishes loved them, and now I have a new hobby: making chapatis. I am surprisingly good at getting them to puff."

At the end of each article you can leave your own comment. When making a reply, you can choose to receive an email if a new comment is made or when someone replies to your comment.

To navigate the site, you can use the column on the right of the page. Here you can check out the most recent articles posted, or you can browse through the archives and see what courses and programs have been organized over the past few years.

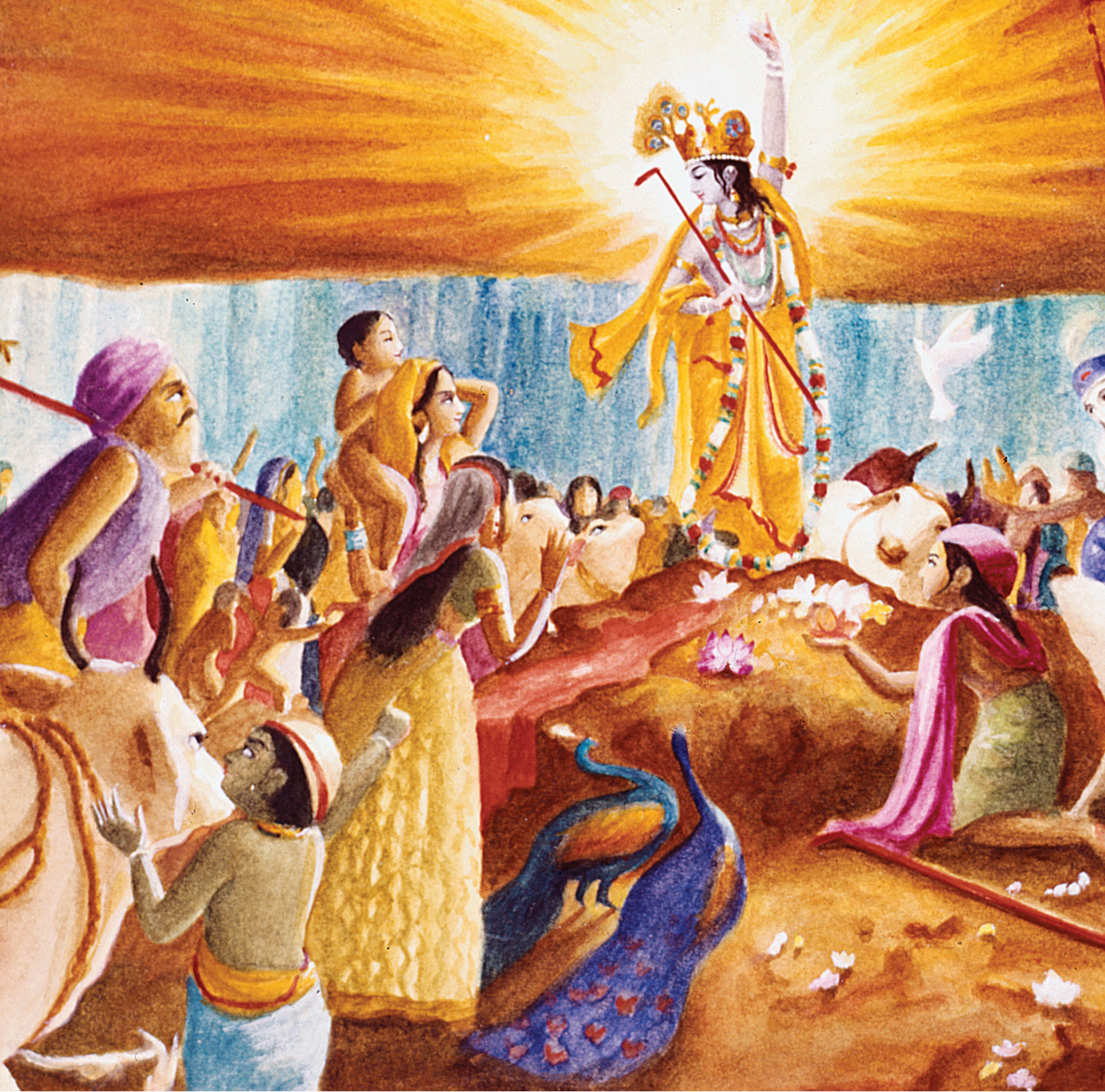
Using the search box on the top right, you can search for previous posts about your favorite subjects.

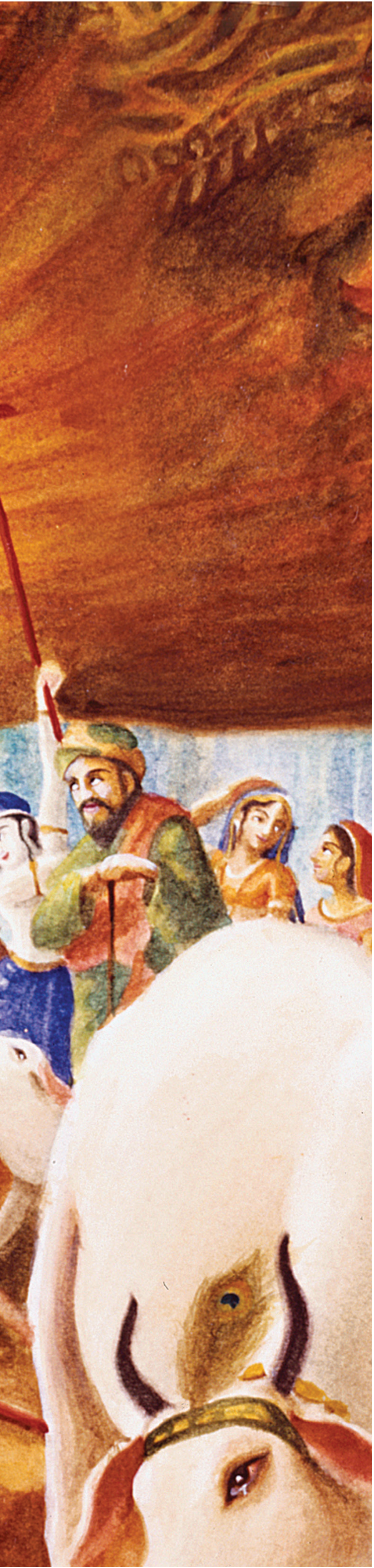
The Mayapur Academy was formally opened in 2007. Jayapatāka Swami, one of ISKCON's governing body commissioners for Mayapur, said at the opening, "This is like a dream come true. . . . It was Prabhupāda's desire that devotees get trained in the *pāñcarātrika* system [of deity worship] here in Mayapur."

Add the Mayapur Academy blog to your Internet bookmarks and check back once in a while to see how Śrīla Prabhupāda's desire for trained *pujārīs* is being fulfilled. —*Antony Brennan*

The Cowherd Men Confused

When Kṛṣṇa deflates an arrogant god to protect His loved ones, they wonder, "Who is this boy?"





Detail from a painting by Muralidhara Dāsa

By Kālakaṇṭha Dāsa

As a charming village lad, Kṛṣṇa owned the simple hearts of His family, friends, and neighbors. So when the villagers gathered to worship Indra, god of the skies, Kṛṣṇa easily sweet-talked them out of the ritual. Why, He argued, worship Indra, who sends rain even where it's not needed? Better to offer thanks to the true source of our wealth, Govardhan Hill.

The simple cowherd men, headed by Kṛṣṇa's father Nanda, agreed to redirect their worship to Govardhan Hill. Amidst a joyous festival of singing, dancing, and feasting, only one person was displeased.

When he saw Nanda rearrange the honors meant for him,
Lord Indra grew as angry as a god has ever been.
He called his most destructive cloud (Sāṁvartaka by name),
and, feeling like the king of all, stood smartly and proclaimed:

"These forest-dwelling bovine-tenders, rich and drunk with pride,
have let their Kṛṣṇa cast my rightful sacrifice aside.
They're like those fools who try to cross the ocean of distress
in leaky boats of mundane quotes while truth goes unexpressed.
These cowherds dare to anger me so they can idolize
a foolish boy who talks too much and thinks Himself so wise?
They think they can ignore me? How their wealth has made them proud.
Sāṁvartaka! Destroy their cows! This cannot be allowed!
The wind-gods will be helping you rebuke this land of Vraj.
My elephant, Airāvata, will lead the entourage.
Together we shall smash this village! Then we'll see them bow
to he who gives them rain and thus maintains their precious cows."

Sāṁvartaka, who saturates the very universe,
began to rain on Vrindavan until it was immersed.
The clouds poured water ceaselessly on Nanda's small domain
and frightened all the residents with lightning bolts and rain.

Torrential rain in massive columns fell in endless flow.
The high ground could no longer be distinguished from the low.
The cows began to shiver from the rain and freezing wind.
Their hands aloft, Lord Kṛṣṇa's friends and family cried to Him,

"O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa! No one is as kind and great as You!
Protect our cows from Indra's wrath—and please, protect us too!"
On seeing their distress and reams of storm clouds gone berserk,
Lord Kṛṣṇa knew the blasting wind and hail was Indra's work.

Lord Kṛṣṇa thought, "My intervention led this god to send
unseasonable rain, fierce wind and hail to harm my friends.
A god like Indra, strong and proud, is prone to such mistakes.
I'll help him keep in mind he's here to give and not to take.

This god is meant to act in goodness, not from foolish pride.
I'll humble him. His ego has grown over-magnified.
Since Indra has harassed My friends and brought them to their knees,
I'll save them now, for I have vowed to guard My devotees."

Lifting Govardhan Hill

And then, just as a child might pluck a mushroom from the lawn,
Lord Kṛṣṇa stretched His youthful hand and lifted Govardhan.

"Oh Mother, Father, friends!" He called, "take shelter here for now.
Be safe beneath this gracious hill. And don't forget your cows.
Your rescue from the wind and rain already has been planned.
Fear not, for I will safely hold this hill up with My hand."
Their minds relieved by Kṛṣṇa's words, the people all conformed
and with their wagons, cows and priests, escaped the deadly storm.

As Kṛṣṇa held the hill aloft the people stared, amazed,
and felt no hunger, sleepiness or thirst for seven days.
They gazed with fascination at the sight of Nanda's son
supporting the gigantic hill and pleasing everyone.

King Indra, on the other hand, could not believe his eyes.
He said, "Our rainfall floods the ground, but then, at once, it dries!
Sāṁvartaka, your lightning falls like flowers on that hill.
Stop pushing air—someone down there has greater strength and skill."

Lord Kṛṣṇa saw the tempest stop and sunshine fill the sky.
"It's over," He informed the men. "You'll all be safe and dry.
The river has receded. Let us go on with our lives.
Go home now with your property, your children and your wives."

Collecting their respective cows and filling up their carts,
the people under Govardhan got ready to depart.
Soon everybody stepped outside. And then, with strength and grace,
the little son of Nanda put the hill back in its place.

The residents of Vrindavan, in waves of ecstasy,
came up, by age and rank, to thank the Lord accordingly.
Some blessed Him; some embraced Him; others chose to genuflect.
The women gave Him yogurt and whole grains to show respect.

His father, mother, brother and stepmother then appeared
and hugged Lord Kṛṣṇa feelingly while shedding happy tears.
Completely overwhelmed with bliss, they blessed their darling boy,
while denizens of heaven showered flowers out of joy.

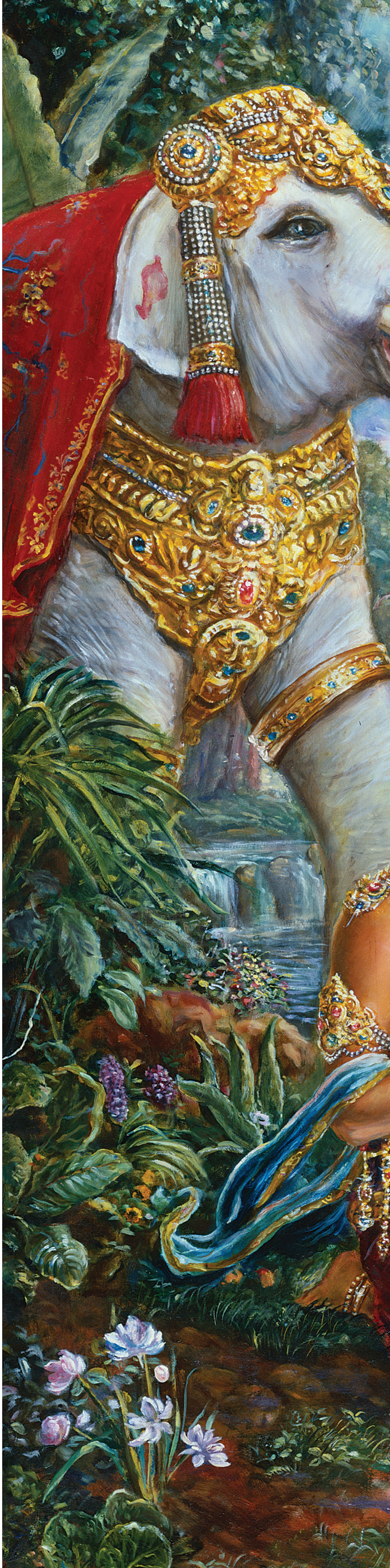
While drums and song resounded through the heavens high above,
the cowherd boys, the Lord's dear friends, surrounded Him in love.
The boys left Govardhan and let their cows eat grass and roam.
The *gopīs,* rapt in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa, ambled to their homes.

The Puzzled Cowherd Men

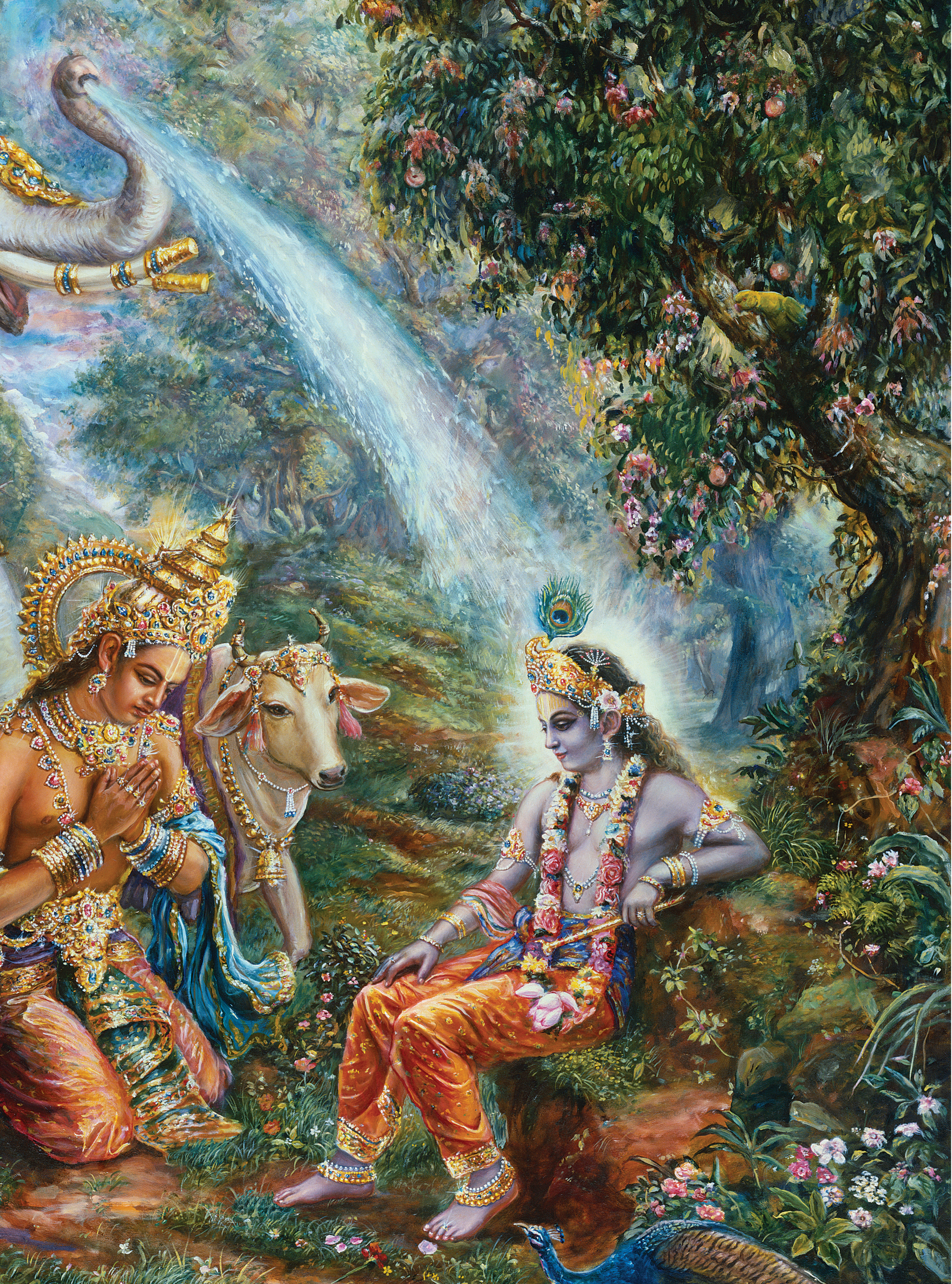
The cowherd men, amazed by Kṛṣṇa, found themselves confused,
so they requested their beloved Nanda for his views.
They said, "Your son lifts mountains and kills demons without fuss.
Since He is our superior, why does he stay with us?

Your son is only seven, yet He has tremendous powers.
He picks up hills as elephants might pick up lotus flowers.
In fact, when He was just an infant, yet to cut a tooth,
He sucked the life from Pūtanā as time sucks out one's youth.

Right: Convinced of Lord Kṛṣṇa's supreme position, a penitent Indra appears before Kṛṣṇa to offer prayers, and Indra's elephant, Airāvata, bathes Kṛṣṇa with celestial water.



Painting by Puṣkara Dāsa



Yamarāja Dāsa

Śrīnāthajī is Lord Kṛṣṇa as the lifter of Govardhan Hill. The original deity, discovered in Vrindavan by Śrī Mādhavendra Purī, resides in Nathdwara, Rajasthan. The deity above is worshiped eslewhere.

At three months, with His toe, He kicked a pushcart to the ground.
And then He rode a whirlwind in the air and brought it down.
Your toddler Kṛṣṇa then uprooted two *arjuna* trees.
Can you explain the meaning of your son's activities?
He killed the demon Vatsa masquerading as a calf.
He seized the demon Baka's beaks and tore the rogue in half.
He spun the giant asses round and hurled them into trees
and danced around Kāliya's heads with much dexterity.
With all the feats and superhuman powers He deploys
how can we think of Kṛṣṇa as a seven-year-old boy?
And Nanda, let us ask you this: now, why is everyone
so caught up in affectionate relations with your son?"

King Nanda said, "My friends, my friends, please do not tax your heads.
When Gargamuni studied Kṛṣṇa's horoscope, he said
that Kṛṣṇa would do miracles, and that is what He's done.
Let me tell you exactly what he said about my son:

"Your Kṛṣṇa has appeared before in many ages past,
in white and red and yellow shades and sundry social castes.
He was a son of Vasudeva, the timeless stars proclaim,
so in this lifetime 'Vāsudeva' shall also be His name.
Your son will gather countless names by His activities.
He'll keep your subjects happy and prevent calamities.
Lord Viṣṇu comes when gods have failed and evil floods the Earth,
and your son is like Viṣṇu. Serve Him well in this new birth."

Continued Nanda, "I've seen Kṛṣṇa, ever since that time,
behave so much like Viṣṇu one might think that He's divine."

The ecstatic Śukadeva concluded:

The cowherd men, enlivened and relieved by what they'd heard,
began to honor Kṛṣṇa with sweet offerings and words.
They saw how Indra pelted them with hail as sharp as knives,
till Kṛṣṇa lifted Govardhan and saved their threatened lives.
The strength and grace and kindness He displayed, as we discussed,
are typical of Kṛṣṇa. Oh, may He be pleased with us!

EPIOGUE: Some people think of God as a friendless orphan, but that is not the case. He enjoys mystifying His closest devotees to think themselves His parents or friends. Sometimes even His friends and parents temporarily recognize His divinity, which leads to still more transcendent fun.

Soon after Indra relented, Kṛṣṇa's father was detained by Varuṇa, god of the waters. When Kṛṣṇa released him, the cowherd men surmised that Kṛṣṇa must be God Himself. Detecting their curiosity, Kṛṣṇa took the cowherd men to His own abode in the spiritual world.

The atmosphere was like Vrindavan, a setting they all knew,
but Kṛṣṇa, there, was worshiped—something they would never do.
The Vedic texts personified surrounded Nanda's son
and prayed to Him incessantly. The cowherd men were stunned.

Teacher and author Kālakaṇṭha Dāsa serves as chaplain of the popular Krishna House student center at the University of Florida in Gainesville. The poetry here was adapted from A God Who Dances, *the author's poetic rendition of the Tenth Canto of the* Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. *Available from the Krishna.com Store.*

CALENDAR

This calendar is calculated for Mayapur, West Bengal, India. The dates, derived from a lunar calendar, may vary by one day for other locations. For the exact dates for your area, go to ***www.krishnadays.com****.*

Because the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement comes in disciplic line from Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the calendar includes not only dates relevant to all followers of the Vedic tradition but also dates relating to Lord Caitanya's associates and prominent spiritual masters in His disciplic succession.

August 14–September 12

(*Month of Hṛṣīkeśa*)

SEPTEMBER

2—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sītā Devī, the consort of Śrīla Advaita Ācārya.

5—Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī, appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Lord Kṛṣṇa's eternal consort. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

8—Parśvā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans. (Fasting till noon today for Śrī Vāmana-dvādaśī tomorrow.)

9—Śrī Vāmana-dvādaśī, appearance anniversary of Lord Vāmana, Lord Kṛṣṇa's incarnation as a dwarf *brāhmaṇa.* Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

10—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, father of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master), and a pioneer in spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in English. Fasting till noon, then feasting.

11—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, foremost teacher of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

12—Anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's accepting *sannyāsa,* the renounced order of life. Third month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from milk).

September 13–October 12

(*Month of Padmanābha*)

19—Anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival in the US.

24—Indirā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

OCTOBER

6—Rāmacandra Vijayotsava, the anniversary of Lord Rāmacandra's victory over the demon Rāvaṇa. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhvācārya, a Vaiṣṇava philosopher and spiritual master who appeared in the thirteenth century.

8—Pakṣavardhinī Mahā-dvādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans for Pāśāṅkuśā Ekādaśī. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, great associates and followers of Lord Caitanya.

11—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Śāradīyā Rāsa-yātrā. Disappearance anniversary of Śrī Murāri Gupta, an associate of Lord Caitanya. Also, the fourth month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from *ūrad dāl*).

October 13–November 10

(*Month of Hṛṣīkeśa*)

17—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa known for his Bengali devotional songs.

20—Appearance of Radha Kunda.

23—Ramā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

26—Diwali, the festival of illuminating Kṛṣṇa's temples with lamps. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for details.

27—Govardhana Pūjā, the festival commemorating the worship of Govardhan Hill by the residents of Vṛndāvana and Kṛṣṇa's lifting the hill. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for details.

30—Disappearance anniversary of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Devotees observe this day with personal remembrances of Śrīla Prabhupāda, readings from his biography, and fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

NOVEMBER

3—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, a great follower of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

6—Utthānā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābājī, the spiritual master of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who was Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master. Fasting till noon.

9—Last day of Dāmodara-vrata and Cāturmāsya.

10—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Rāsa-yātrā. Last day of Bhīṣma Pañcaka.

REGULATED LIFE

(*continued from page 10*)

is the *śāstric* injunction. And if the father does not know how to stop his own birth and death, then what is the use of producing children? The father should be so sympathetic with the children that he must know the pains of birth and death.

All parents desire the welfare of their children. To provide the greatest welfare, the mother must think, "This child has come into my womb; he has become my son. This is the last time. No more birth and death. He will be educated in that way." That is the parent's responsibility. Not making him eat meat and get fat. However fat he may be, he'll still die. You cannot stop his death simply by making him fat like an elephant.

Don't beget children if you have no responsibility. People think, "We'll have sex, but we shall avoid this responsibility. So then let us use contraceptives." This is the greatest sinful life. You are killing; you are a murderer. Now in the Western countries they are actually killing the child. They have made laws that allow the killing of the child in the womb. So if the society has become so awfully sinful, how can people expect peace and prosperity? That is not possible.

Those who are leading sinful lives are *duṣkṛtinaḥ. Kṛti* means "very meritorious." But *duṣkṛti* means the opposite. It is not *sukṛti. Su* means "for well-being," and *duṣkṛti* means "for creating disturbances." There are many brains nowadays. People know how to use their brain. But they are *duṣkṛtinaḥ.* Therefore it is a godless society, and there is so much restlessness in society because the *duṣkṛtinaḥ* are working. Now, in their place, *sukṛtinaḥ* must be brought. *Catur-vidhā bhajante māṁ janāḥ sukṛtino 'rjuna:* "Four kinds of pious men [*sukṛtinaḥ*] surrender unto Me." [*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.16] Then there will be peace and prosperity.

Thank you very much.

BACH TO GODHEAD

(*continued from page 14*)

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava musical styles, such as Narottama Dāsa's *garanhati,* Śrīnivāsa's *manohar-shahi,* and Śyāmānanda's *reneti*, have distinguishing techniques, even if many of the nuances are lost to us today. *Garan-hati,* for example, starts slowly and melodically, with a simple beat, gradually building up to greater complexity and finally a crescendo, with exuberant singing and dancing. As opposed to other forms of *kīrtana,* this unique form of Vaiṣṇava music always includes lyrics glorifying Śrī Caitanya (*gauracandrikā*) before praising Kṛṣṇa. The core of these techniques has been handed down from master to disciple, and the essential spirit of these *kīrtana* performances can be found at any Hare Kṛṣṇa temple.

While all forms of music should glorify God, the music of *kīrtana* is intended solely for that purpose. And we can take part in it according to our heart's desire or spontaneous feeling. The scriptures and the Vaiṣṇava teachers of the past explain music as a detailed science, it is true. But what they really hope to convey is the *bhāva,* the emotion, of *kīrtana.* It is this that transports one to the kingdom of God. Chanting God's names is the essence of music, and Vaiṣṇavas focus on this aspect of transcendental sound.

Music As Devotional Expression

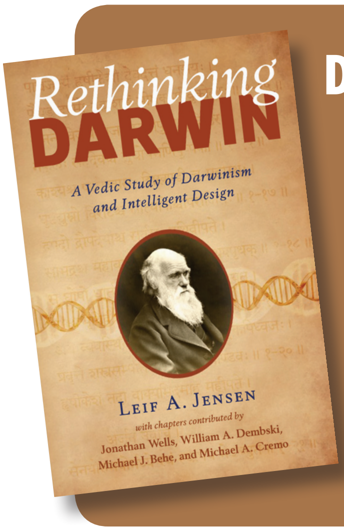
"Did you enjoy the show?" my brother asked me as the concert ended.

Snapping out of my meditation on Vaiṣṇava music, I told him I did. Bach's essential purpose, I thought, focuses on using music in devotional ways. And that's just what the Vaiṣṇava tradition says music is for.

"I think Bach would have liked the Kṛṣṇa conscious view of the spiritual world," I said. "The ancient text known as the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.56) says, 'In the spiritual world, every step is a dance, and every word is a song.' Music pervades the spiritual world. And God's devotees in the here and now fill their lives with devotional song and dance to prepare to enter the music-filled realm of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes."

Leaving behind the echoes of Bach's devotionally inspired music, my brother and I walked out of the concert hall and into the cacophonous sounds of New York City streets.

Satyarāja Dāsa, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, is a BTG associate editor. He has written over twenty books on Kṛṣṇa consciousness and lives near New York City.


Rethinking
DARWIN
A Vedic Study of Darwinism and Intelligent Design
Leif A. Jensen
with chapters contributed by
Jonathan Wells, William A. Dembski,
Michael J. Behe, and Michael A. Cremo

Darwinism & Intelligent Design

In *Rethinking Darwin,* Danish science writer Leif A. Jensen (Lalitānātha Dāsa), in collaboration with leading Intelligent Design proponents such as Dr. Michael Behe, Dr. William Dembski, and Dr. Jonathan Wells, points out flaws in the Darwinian paradigm and examines the case for intelligent design. The argument for design is next expanded with further evidence from archeology, cosmology, and studies of consciousness. Finally, based on the irreducible nature of consciousness, the book suggests an alternative paradigm drawn from the Vedic texts of ancient India.

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BOOK SECTION: ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

Referred to as "the ripe fruit of the tree of Vedic literature," *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most complete and authoritative exposition of Vedic knowledge. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa,* or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. Here we present *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in serialized form, with the original Sanskrit text, transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

DHRUVA'S BATTLEFIELD PROWESS

After overcoming fearsome magical weapons, Dhruva Mahārāja kills many Yakṣa soldiers.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 10

28 एवंविधान्यनेकानि त्रासनान्यमनस्विनाम्
समसृजुस्तिग्मगतय आसुर्या माययासुराः

evaṁ-vidhāny anekāni
trāsanāny amanasvinām
sasṛjus tigma-gataya
āsuryā māyayāsurāḥ

evam-vidhāni—(phenomena) like this; *anekāni*—many varieties of; *trāsanāni*—fearful; *amanasvinām*—to the less intelligent men; *sasṛjuḥ*—they created; *tigma-gatayaḥ*—of heinous nature; *āsuryā*—demoniac; *māyayā*—by illusion; *asurāḥ*—the demons.

The demon Yakṣas are by nature very heinous, and by their demoniac power of illusion they can create many strange phenomena to frighten one who is less intelligent.

29 ध्रुवे प्रयुक्तामसुरैस्तां मायामतिदुस्तराम्
निशम्य तस्य मुनयः शमाशंसन् समागताः

dhruve prayuktām asurais
tāṁ māyām atidustarām
niśamya tasya munayaḥ
śam āśaṁsan samāgatāḥ

dhruve—against Dhruva; *prayuktām*—inflicted; *asuraiḥ*—by the demons; *tām*—that; *māyām*—mystic power; *ati-dustarām*—very dangerous; *niśamya*—after hearing; *tasya*—his; *munayaḥ*—the great sages; *śam*—good fortune; *āśaṁsan*—giving encouragement for; *samāgatāḥ*—assembled.

When the great sages heard that Dhruva Mahārāja was overpowered by the illusory mystic tricks of the demons, ① they immediately assembled to offer him auspicious encouragement.

मुनय ऊचुः
30 औत्तानपाद भगवांस्तव शार्ङ्गधन्वा
देवः क्षिणोत्ववनतार्तिहरो विपक्षान्
यन्नामधेयमभिधाय निशम्य चाद्धा
लोकोऽञ्जसा तरति दुस्तरमङ्ग मृत्युम्

munaya ūcuḥ
auttānapāda bhagavāṁs tava śārṅgadhanvā
devaḥ kṣiṇotv avanatārti-haro vipakṣān
yan-nāmadheyam abhidhāya niśamya cāddhā
loko 'ñjasā tarati dustaram aṅga mṛtyum

(1) What did the great sages do when they heard of Dhruva's predicament?

munayaḥ ūcuḥ—the sages said; *auttānapāda*—O son of King Uttānapāda; *bhagavān*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *tava*—your; *śārṅga-dhanvā*—one who bears the bow called Śārṅga; *devaḥ*—the Lord; *kṣiṇotu*—may He kill; *avanata*—of the surrendered soul; *ārti*—the distresses; *haraḥ*—who removes; *vipakṣān*—enemies; *yat*—whose; *nāmadheyam*—holy name; *abhidhāya*—uttering; *niśamya*—hearing; *ca*—also; *addhā*—immediately; *lokaḥ*—persons; *añjasā*—fully; *tarati*—overcome; *dustaram*—insurmountable; *aṅga*—O Dhruva; *mṛtyum*—death.

All the sages said: Dear Dhruva, O son of King Uttānapāda, may the Supreme Personality of Godhead known as Śārṅgadhanvā, who relieves the distresses of His devotees, kill all your threatening enemies. The holy name of the Lord is as powerful as the Lord Himself. ② Therefore, simply by chanting and hearing the holy name of the Lord, many men can be fully protected from fierce death without difficulty. Thus a devotee is saved.

PURPORT: The great *ṛṣis* approached Dhruva Mahārāja at a time when his mind was very perplexed due to the magical feats exhibited by the Yakṣas. A devotee is always protected by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By His inspiration only, the sages came to encourage Dhruva Mahārāja and assure him that there was no danger because he was a soul fully surrendered to the Supreme Lord. By the grace of the Lord, if a devotee, at the time of death, can simply chant His holy name—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—simply by chanting this *mahā-mantra,* he immediately surpasses the great ocean of the material sky and enters the spiritual sky. He never has to come back for repetition of birth and death. ③ Simply by chanting the holy name of the Lord, one can surpass the ocean of death, so Dhruva Mahārāja was certainly able to surpass the illusory magical feats of the Yakṣas, which for the time being disturbed his mind.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 11

मैत्रेय उवाच
1 निशम्य गदतामेवमृषीणां धनुषि ध्रुवः
सन्दधेऽस्त्रमुपस्पृश्य यन्नारायणनिर्मितम्

maitreya uvāca
niśamya gadatām evam
ṛṣīṇāṁ dhanuṣi dhruvaḥ
sandadhe 'stram upaspṛśya
yan nārāyaṇa-nirmitam

maitreyaḥ uvāca—the sage Maitreya continued to speak; *niśamya*—having heard; *gadatām*—the words; *evam*—thus; *ṛṣīṇām*—of the sages; *dhanuṣi*—upon his bow; *dhruvaḥ*—Dhruva Mahārāja; *sandadhe*—fixed; *astram*—an arrow; *upaspṛśya*—after touching water; *yat*—that which; *nārāyaṇa*—by Nārāyaṇa; *nirmitam*—was made.

Śrī Maitreya said: My dear Vidura, when Dhruva Mahārāja heard the encouraging words of the great sages, he performed the ācamana by touching water and then took up his arrow made by Lord Nārāyaṇa and fixed it upon his bow.

PURPORT: ④ Dhruva Mahārāja was given a specific arrow made by Lord Nārāyaṇa Himself, and he now fixed it upon his bow to finish the illusory atmosphere created by the Yakṣas. As it is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.14), *mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te.* Without Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, no one is able to overcome the action of the illusory energy. ⑤ Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has also given us a nice weapon for this age, as stated in the *Bhāgavatam: sāṅgopāṅgāstra*—in this age, the *nārāyaṇāstra,* or weapon to drive away *māyā,* is the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra in pursuance of the associates of Lord Caitanya, such as Advaita Prabhu, Nityānanda, Gadādhara, and Śrīvāsa.

(2) What did the sages suggest that Dhruva should do?
(3) Why should Dhruva be sure that chanting the Lord's holy names would protect him from the Yakṣas?
(4) From whom did Dhruva receive his special arrow?
(5) What weapon has Caitanya Mahāprabhu given us to drive away *māyā*?

2 सन्धीयमान एतस्मिन्माया गुह्यकनिर्मिताः
क्षिप्रं विनेशुर्विदुर क्लेशा ज्ञानोदये यथा

sandhīyamāna etasmin
māyā guhyaka-nirmitāḥ
kṣipraṁ vineśur vidura
kleśā jñānodaye yathā

sandhīyamāne—while joining to his bow; *etasmin*—this *nārārayaṇāstra; māyāḥ*—the illusions; *guhyaka-nirmitāḥ*—created by the Yakṣas; *kṣipram*—very soon; *vineśuḥ*—were destroyed; *vidura*—O Vidura; *kleśāḥ*—illusory pains and pleasures; *jñāna-udaye*—upon the arising of knowledge; *yathā*—just as.

As soon as Dhruva Mahārāja joined the nārāyaṇāstra arrow to his bow, the illusion created by the Yakṣas was immediately vanquished, just as all material pains and pleasures are vanquished when one becomes fully cognizant of the self.

PURPORT: Kṛṣṇa is like the sun, and *māyā,* or the illusory energy of Kṛṣṇa, is like darkness. Darkness means absence of light; similarly, *māyā* means absence of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa consciousness and *māyā* are always there, side by side. As soon as there is awakening of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, all the illusory pains and pleasures of material existence are vanquished. *Māyām etāṁ taranti te:* constant chanting of the *mahā-mantra* will keep us always aloof from the illusory energy of *māyā.*

3 तस्यार्षास्त्रं धनुषि प्रयुञ्जतः
सुवर्णपुङ्खाः कलहंसवाससः
विनिःसृता आविविशुर्द्विषद्बलं
यथा वनं भीमरवाः शिखण्डिनः

tasyārṣāstraṁ dhanuṣi prayuñjataḥ
suvarṇa-puṅkhāḥ kalahaṁsa-vāsasaḥ
viniḥsṛtā āviviśur dviṣad-balaṁ
yathā vanaṁ bhīma-ravāḥ śikhaṇḍinaḥ

tasya—while Dhruva; *ārṣa-astram*—the weapon given by Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi; *dhanuṣi*—on his bow; *prayuñjataḥ*—fixed; *suvarṇa-puṅkhāḥ*—(arrows) with golden shafts; *kalahaṁsa-vāsasaḥ*—with feathers like the wings of a swan; *viniḥsṛtāḥ*—sprang out; *āviviśuḥ*—entered; *dviṣat-balam*—the soldiers of the enemy; *yathā*—just as; *vanam*—into a forest; *bhīma-ravāḥ*—making a tumultuous sound; *śikhaṇḍinaḥ*—peacocks.

Even as Dhruva Mahārāja fixed the weapon made by Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi onto his bow, ⑥ arrows with golden shafts and feathers like the wings of a swan flew out from it. They entered the enemy soldiers with a great hissing sound, just as peacocks enter a forest with tumultuous crowing.

4 तैस्तिग्मधारैः प्रधने शिलीमुखै-
रितस्ततः पुण्यजना उपद्रुताः
तमभ्यधावन् कुपिता उदायुधाः
सुपर्णमुन्नद्धफणा इवाहयः

tais tigma-dhāraiḥ pradhane śilī-mukhair
itas tataḥ puṇya-janā upadrutāḥ
tam abhyadhāvan kupitā udāyudhāḥ
suparṇam unnaddha-phaṇā ivāhayaḥ

taiḥ—by those; *tigma-dhāraiḥ*—which had a sharp point; *pradhane*—on the battlefield; *śilī-mukhaiḥ*—arrows; *itaḥ tataḥ*—here and there; *puṇya-janāḥ*—the Yakṣas; *upadrutāḥ*—being greatly agitated; *tam*—towards Dhruva Mahārāja; *abhyadhāvan*—rushed; *kupitāḥ*—being angry; *udāyudhāḥ*—with upraised weapons; *suparṇam*—towards Garuḍa; *unnaddha-phaṇāḥ*—with upraised hoods; *iva*—like; *ahayaḥ*—serpents.

Those sharp arrows dismayed the enemy soldiers, who became almost unconscious, but various Yakṣas on the battlefield, in a rage against Dhruva Mahārāja, somehow or other collected their weapons and attacked. Just as serpents agitated by Garuḍa rush towards Garuḍa with upraised hoods, all the Yakṣa soldiers prepared to overcome Dhruva Mahārāja with their upraised weapons.

5 स तान् पृषत्कैरभिधावतो मृधे
निकृत्तबाहूरुशिरोधरोदरान्
निनाय लोकं परमर्कमण्डलं
व्रजन्ति निर्भिद्य यमूर्ध्वरेतसः

sa tān pṛṣatkair abhidhāvato mṛdhe
nikṛtta-bāhūru-śirodharodarān
nināya lokaṁ param arka-maṇḍalaṁ
vrajanti nirbhidya yam ūrdhva-retasaḥ

saḥ—he (Dhruva Mahārāja); *tān*—all the Yakṣas; *pṛṣatkaiḥ*—by his arrows; *abhidhāvataḥ*—coming forward; *mṛdhe*—in the battlefield; *nikṛtta*—being separated; *bāhu*—arms; *ūru*—thighs; *śiraḥ-dhara*—necks; *udarān*—and bellies; *nināya*—delivered; *lokam*—to the planet; *param*—supreme; *arka-maṇḍalam*—the sun globe; *vrajanti*—go; *nirbhidya*—piercing; *yam*—to which; *ūrdhva-retasaḥ*—those who do not discharge semen at any time.

When Dhruva Mahārāja saw the Yakṣas coming forward, he immediately took his arrows and cut the enemies to pieces. Separating their arms, legs, heads, and bellies from their bodies, he delivered the Yakṣas to the planetary system which is situated above the sun globe and which is attainable only by first-class brahmacārīs, who have never discharged their semen.

PURPORT: To be killed by the Lord or by His devotees is auspicious for nondevotees. ⑦ The Yakṣas were killed indiscriminately by Dhruva Mahārāja, but they attained the planetary system attainable only for *brahmacārīs* who never discharged their semen. As the impersonalist *jñānīs* or the demons killed by the Lord attain Brahmaloka, or Satyaloka, persons killed by a devotee of the Lord also attain Satyaloka. To reach the Satyaloka planetary system described here, one has to be elevated above the sun globe. Killing, therefore, is not always bad. If the killing is done by the Supreme Personality of Godhead or His devotee or in great sacrifices, it is for the benefit of the entity killed in that way. Material so-called nonviolence

(6) What happened when Dhruva Mahārāja fixed the weapon made by Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi onto his bow?
(7) What planet did the Yakṣas attain after being killed by Dhruva?

is very insignificant in comparison to killing done by the Supreme Personality of Godhead or His devotees. ⑧ Even when a king or the state government kills a person who is a murderer, that killing is for the benefit of the murderer, for thus he may become cleared of all sinful reactions.

An important word in this verse is *ūrdhva-retasaḥ,* which means *brahmacārīs* who have never discharged semen. ⑨ Celibacy is so important that even though one does not undergo any austerities, penances, or ritualistic ceremonies prescribed in the *Vedas,* if one simply keeps himself a pure *brahmacārī,* not discharging his semen, the result is that after death he goes to the Satyaloka.

Generally, sex life is the cause of all miseries in the material world. In the Vedic civilization sex life is restricted in various ways. Out of the whole population of the social structure, only the *gṛhasthas* are allowed restricted sex life. All others refrain from sex. The people of this age especially do not know the value of not discharging semen. As such, they are variously entangled with material qualities and suffer an existence of struggle only.

The word *ūrdhva-retasaḥ* especially indicates the Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs,* who undergo strict principles of austerity. But in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.16) the Lord says that even if one goes up to Brahmaloka, he again comes back (*ābrahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ punar āvartino 'rjuna*). Therefore, actual *mukti,* or liberation, can be attained only by devotional service, because by devotional service one can go above Brahmaloka, or to the spiritual world, wherefrom he never comes back. Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* are very proud of becoming liberated, but actual liberation is not possible unless one is in touch with the Supreme Lord in devotional service. ⑩ It is said, *hariṁ vinā na mṛtim taranti:* without Kṛṣṇa's mercy, no one can have liberation.

6 तान् हन्यमानानभिवीक्ष्य गुह्यका-
ननागसश्चित्ररथेन भूरिशः
औत्तानपादिं कृपया पितामहो
मनुर्जगादोपगतः सहर्षिभिः

tān hanyamānān abhivīkṣya guhyakān
anāgasaś citra-rathena bhūriśaḥ
auttānapādiṁ kṛpayā pitāmaho
manur jagādopagataḥ saharṣibhiḥ

tān—those Yakṣas; *hanyamānān*—being killed; *abhivīkṣya*—seeing; *guhyakān*—the Yakṣas; *anāgasaḥ*—offenseless; *citra-rathena*—by Dhruva Mahārāja, who had a beautiful chariot; *bhūriśaḥ*—greatly; *auttānapādim*—unto the son of Uttānapāda; *kṛpayā*—out of mercy; *pitā-mahaḥ*—the grandfather; *manuḥ*—Svāyambhuva Manu; *jagāda*—gave instructions; *upagataḥ*—approached; *saha-ṛṣibhiḥ*—with great sages.

When Svāyambhuva Manu saw that his grandson Dhruva Mahārāja was killing so many of the Yakṣas who were not actually offenders, out of his great compassion he approached Dhruva with great sages to give him good instruction.

PURPORT: Dhruva Mahārāja attacked Alakāpurī, the city of the Yakṣas, because his brother was killed by one of them. Actually only one of the citizens, not all of them, was guilty of killing his brother, Uttama. Dhruva Mahārāja, of course, took a very serious step when his brother was killed by the Yakṣas. War was declared, and the fighting was going on. This sometimes happens in present days also—for one man's fault a whole state is sometimes attacked. This kind of wholesale attack is not approved by Manu, the father and lawgiver of the human race. He therefore wanted to stop his grandson Dhruva from continuing to kill the Yakṣa citizens who were not offenders.

मनुरुवाच
7 अलं वत्सातिरोषेण तमोद्वारेण पाप्मना
येन पुण्यजनानेतानवधीस्त्वमनागसः

manur uvāca
alaṁ vatsātiroṣeṇa
tamo-dvāreṇa pāpmanā
yena puṇya-janān etān
avadhīs tvam anāgasaḥ

manuḥ uvāca—Manu said; *alam*—enough; *vatsa*—my dear boy; *atiroṣeṇa*—with excessive anger; *tamaḥ-dvāreṇa*—the path of ignorance; *pāpmanā*—sinful; *yena*—by which; *puṇya-janān*—the Yakṣas; *etān*—all these; *avadhīḥ*—you have killed; *tvam*—you; *anāgasaḥ*—offenseless.

Lord Manu said: My dear son, please stop. It is not good to become unnecessarily angry—it is the path to hellish life. Now you are going beyond the limit by killing Yakṣas who are actually not offenders.

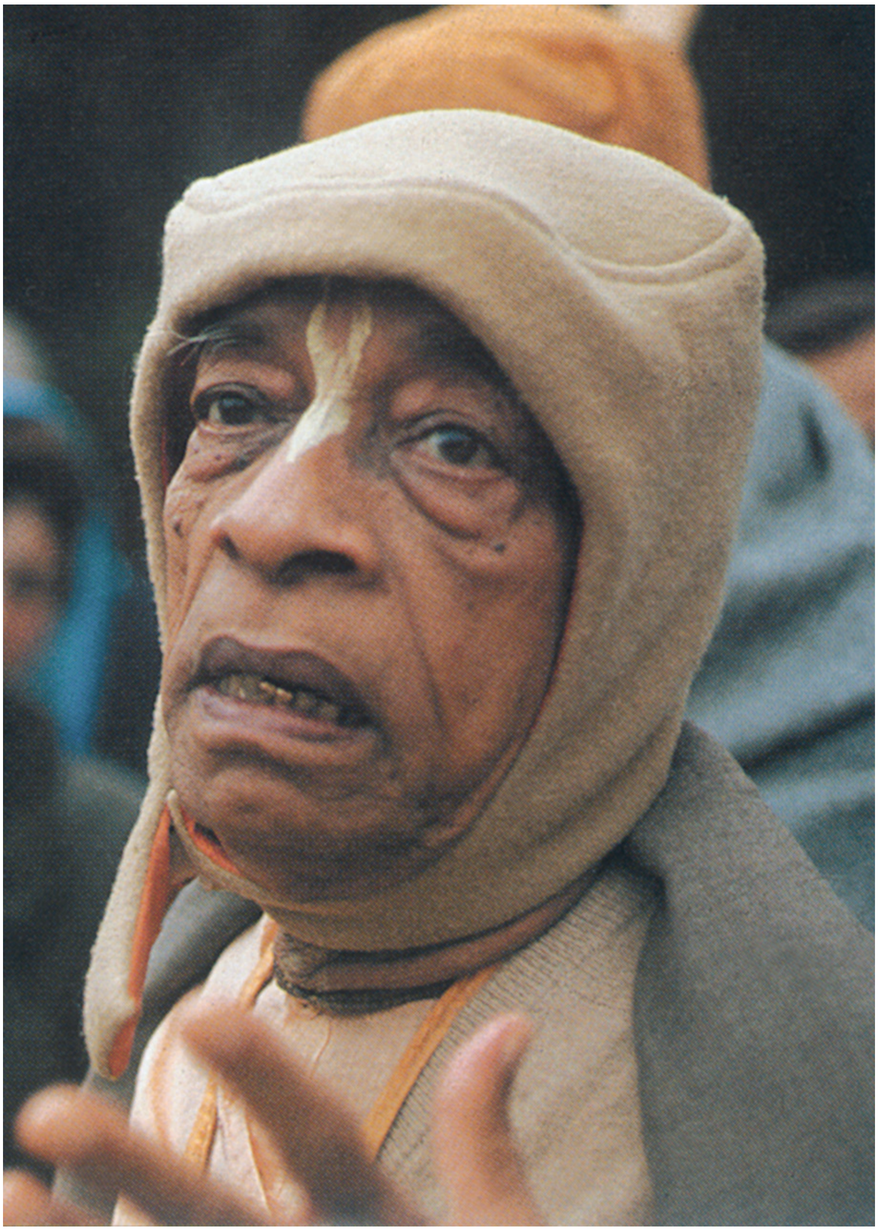
[*Continued in the next issue.*]

(8) How is a murderer benefited by being killed by the government?
(9) What is the result of keeping oneself a pure *brahmacārī*?
(10) Why can liberation be attained only by devotional service?

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

The Best Conditioning

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples took place in June 1974 during an early-morning walk in Geneva.



Śrīla Prabhupāda: All the big leaders in the world are foolishly thinking they are independent. They are just like the dog who forgets that he is controlled by his master. The dog doesn't know he's controlled. He's thinking, "I am now free. *Rau! Rau! Rau!*" But then with a little pull of the chain, the master stops all his nonsense.

Disciple: Especially in the Western countries, Śrīla Prabhupāda, people don't like to think they are controlled.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Therefore they are rascals. Kṛṣṇa directly says, *ahaṅkāra vimūḍhātmā kartāham iti manyate* [*Bhagavad-gītā* 3.27]: "The fools and rascals think 'I am doing everything.'" One is controlled at every step, yet he is thinking, "I am doing everything." Therefore he is a rascal. In spite of his big, big house, his nice road and good car, he is a rascal. He thinks he is independent, that he will not die, but as soon as *māyā* [the material energy] kicks on his face, he must die. Immediately. He may protest, "I have still got some business to do!" but *māyā* says, "No, no, sir, you must die immediately." And he thinks he is not controlled. What is this nonsense?

So, real knowledge is to understand, "In spite of all my so-called advancement of civilization, I am controlled." That is the beginning of knowledge. Then we should think how to get out of this control. But if we think, "I am not controlled," then we are no better than the cats and dogs. That is explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [3.27]. *Prakrteḥ kriyamāṇāni:* by *prakṛti,* by the material nature, one is pulled by the ear—”Come here!”

"Yes, sir."

"Come here!"

"Yes, sir."

As soon as you eat a little more than you require, *māyā* says, "You must fast for three days." And you are not controlled? Just see how foolish these people are. And they are getting the Nobel Prize.

Disciple: No one has ever gotten the Nobel Prize for saying, "Yes, we are all controlled."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: This is because the men who are awarding the Nobel Prize are also rascals. It is a society of fools and rascals. Therefore my Guru Mahārāja [spiritual master]

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used to say, "This is a society of the cheaters and the cheated."

Disciple: I have prepared an argument this morning.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: What is that?

Disciple: The psychologists have a theory that people are conditioned by their environment, their upbringing, their parents and teachers, and so on, and that because of this conditioning they act and think in a certain way. So the psychologists argue that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is just another kind of conditioning—that when you live in a Hare Kṛṣṇa temple you leave one kind of conditioning but you enter another kind of conditioning.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, we agree that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is conditioning, certainly. Your position is that you must be conditioned. If you become conditioned by God, that is your perfection. And if you become conditioned by *māyā,* that is your trouble. But in either case, you must be conditioned: you cannot be independent.

Unfortunately, you are thinking you are independent. That is your rascaldom. You should always think, "I must be conditioned. That is my constitutional position in life." In the *Bhagavad-gītā* [9.13] Kṛṣṇa says, *mahātmānas tu māṁ pārtha daivīṁ prakṛtim āśritāh:* "The great souls, the *mahātmās,* are under My spiritual nature." So the devotees are still conditioned: they are under Kṛṣṇa's spiritual nature (*daivī prakṛti*).

First of all we must understand that our natural position is to be conditioned.

Now, by whom shall we be conditioned?

Kṛṣṇa says, *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja:* "Become conditioned by Me; surrender to Me. Then you will be happy." [Bg. 18.66] Those who are thinking, "We shall not be conditioned" are in *māyā* [illusion]. The *Vedas* say, *nityo nityānāṁ cetanaś cetanānāṁ eko bahūnāṁ yo vidadhāti kāmān:* "Among all the eternal living beings, one is supplying all the rest with their necessities of life." [*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.13] So God is supplying us with the necessities of life. Therefore we should recognize that we are living under His control and serve Him. Suppose you are giving me all my necessities of life. Shouldn't I reciprocate by rendering some service to you?

No one can be independent; it is not possible. These rascals are putting forward a wrong philosophy—this idea of "complete independence." They are simply becoming more and more conditioned by Kṛṣṇa's external, material energy.

Devotee: Their idea is that since our problems come from the wrong kind of conditioning during childhood, we should be given the opportunity in childhood of a good family, a good education, and so on, and in that way there won't be a bad reaction later on in life.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That means a child should be given the chance for better conditioning. But conditioning must go on. If they say, "Let the child be given freedom!" they are fools.

Disciple: They say that the child can have freedom when he receives good conditioning.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Bad conditioning or good conditioning—where is the freedom? Instead of bad conditioning, they are suggesting good conditioning; but that is not freedom. Suppose you are in the prison house. You are heavily conditioned. But even when you are released and get your so-called freedom, you are still controlled by the laws of the state. You are not free. You have simply gone from bad conditioning to good conditioning. And if you obey the state laws, then you are a good citizen and can live peacefully. But you are still controlled. How can you think you are free? That is foolishness.

Disciple: So in other words, your idea is to give people a better conditioning?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, not a better conditioning—the best conditioning. The best conditioning is to be under the control of Kṛṣṇa. That is the first-class way of life, and that is the only way to get free of the control of the material energy.

Photo by Yamarāja Dāsa

BACK TO GODHEAD
1944
50 years of BTG
1994

HARE KṚṢṆA
HARE KṚṢṆA
KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA
HARE HARE
HARE RĀMA
HARE RĀMA
RĀMA RĀMA
HARE HARE

PRONUNCIATION:
ha-ray, krish-na,
ra-ma (rhymes with “drama”)
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chanting, click on the
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Rathayātrā Festival—Jacksonville Beach, Florida, 2011

NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES

Where Science Points to the Soul

Scientific research into NDEs supports the Vedic explanation of consciousness and perception.

By Caitanya Caraṇa Dāsa

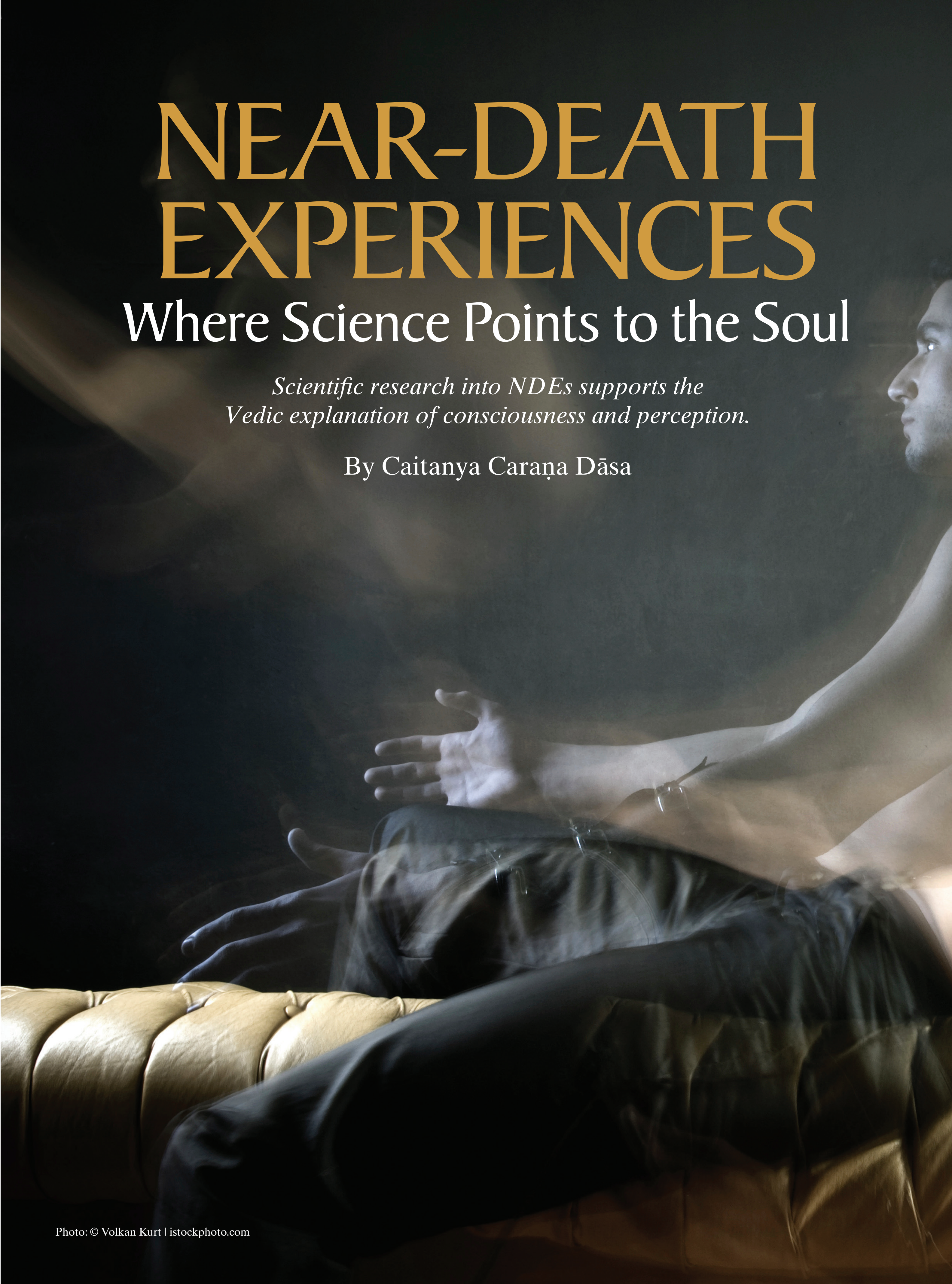


Photo: © Volkan Kurt | istockphoto.com

> “Science may keep saying: ‘Such things are simply impossible’; yet so long as the stories multiply in different lands, and so few are positively explained away, it is bad method to ignore them.”
> —American psychologist William James

IS THERE ANY scientific proof for the existence of the soul?” is a common question devotees face whenever they share the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness with others. Yes, there is. Scientific research into fields like consciousness, past-life memories, and near-death experiences (NDEs) do indeed provide persuasive evidence. In this article I’ll discuss the phenomenon of NDEs.

Unusual Yet Universal

NDEs are experiences of extraordinary visions and perceptions during periods of unconsciousness among people who were medically dead or nearly dead due to various causes like accidents, diseases, surgeries, or attempted suicides. These people returned from the dead or the near-dead to tell us their amazing experiences.

NDEs have been reported since time immemorial in cultures all over the world. In a cross-cultural study published in *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research,* March 1978, researcher Dean Sheils reported that NDE beliefs appear in about ninety-five per cent of the world's cultures and are striking in their uniformity even though the cultures are diverse in structure and location. In modern times, popular interest in near-death experiences was initially sparked by Raymond Moody's 1975 book *Life After Life,* which reported numerous NDEs among a wide cross section of people. According to the Gallup and Proctor survey in 1980–1981, fifteen percent of all Americans who have been in near-death situations have had an NDE. In a more clinical setting, Pim van Lommel, a cardiologist from Netherlands, found that, among patients who had been successfully revived from cardiac arrests, eighteen percent had experienced an NDE.

A retired Air Force pilot who had suffered a massive heart attack recounted the resuscitation procedure in rich detail.

Evidence Evaporates Skepticism

During the NDEs, patients report undergoing many extraordinary experiences—meeting effulgent beings, having a life review, traveling into a realm filled with beautiful colors—many of which profoundly change people's lives. From the viewpoint of scientific testability, the most relevant among the NDEs are the autoscopic out-of-body experiences (OBEs), in which the patients report having seen their body from a perspective outside the body (generally from above the operating table) and also give verifiable descriptions of, say, the surgical procedures adopted by the medical staff. According to current mainstream science, unconscious patients cannot be aware of such details, and so their descriptions can be nothing more than hallucinations or educated guesses at best.

This was the attitude of Dr. Michael Sabom, an American cardiologist who started his NDE research in the late 1970s as a skeptic. In his book *Recollections of Death: A Medical Investigation* Sabom outlined his initial plan to disprove the claimed perceptions of autoscopic OBE patients: "I would pit my experience as a trained cardiologist against the professed visual recollections of lay individuals. In so doing, I was convinced that obvious inconsistencies would appear which would reduce these purported visual observations to no more than an 'educated guess' on the part of the patient."

Sabom's initial skepticism soon faded away as evidence kept piling up during his more than three decades of NDE research. Here are some of the cases from Sabom's books that changed his understanding of life and death and also the understanding of thousands of his readers.

A retired Air Force pilot who had suffered a massive heart attack recounted the resuscitation procedure in rich detail. He even described the motions of the two needles of the defibrillator, an electronic device used to administer electric shock to attempt to restore the normal functioning of the heart: "It [the defibrillator meter] was square and had two needles on there, one fixed and one which moved . . . the first needle moved each time they punched the thing and somebody was messing with it. And I think they moved the fixed needle and it stayed still . . . It [the moving needle] seemed to come up rather slowly, really. It didn't just pop up like an ammeter or a voltmeter or something registering . . . The first time it went between one-third and one-half scale. And then they did it again, and this time it went up over one-half scale, and the third time it was about three-quarters."

Sabom explains the significance of this specific observation: "I was particularly fascinated by his description of a 'fixed' needle and a 'moving' needle on the face of the defibrillator as it was being charged with electricity. The movement of these two needles is not something he could have observed unless he had actually seen this instrument in use. These two needles are individually used (1) to preselect the amount of electricity to be delivered to the patient [patient's description: "they moved the fixed needle and it stayed still"] and (2) to indicate the defibrillator is being charged to the preselected amount [patient's description: "the moving needle seemed to come up rather slowly, really. It didn't just pop up like an ammeter or a voltmeter or something registering"]. This charging procedure is only performed immediately prior to defibrillation, since once charged, this machine poses a serious electrical hazard unless it is correctly discharged in a very specific manner. Moreover, the meters of the type described by this man are not found on more recent defibrillator models, but were in common use in 1973, at the time of his cardiac arrest."

How could a person who was (1) in the middle of a cardiac arrest, (2) about to be jolted by an electric shock (3) while being almost certainly unconscious, and (4) not in a physical position to observe the defibrillator meter (5) methodically observe the motion of the needles on its dial?

In another Sabom case, a woman provided a medically accurate and detailed description of her lumbar disk surgery, performed with the patient in the supine position. She reported that her surgery had been performed, to her surprise, not by her surgeon but by the chief resident in neurosurgery, a correct detail that had not been divulged to her.

Following the lead of Sabom, many other researchers have also come across NDEs involving accurate or factual perceptions.

Unconscious Yet Conscious?

How could the subjects have acquired such accurate information of what happened while they were medically unconscious? Could they have gotten the information about the medical procedures from prior general knowledge? Such precise knowledge seemed unlikely among patients not directly connected with the medical profession. Still, Sabom, being a rigorously scientific researcher, decided to evaluate this possibility. He questioned a control group of twenty-five cardiac patients whose backgrounds were similar to those of persons reporting NDEs. When the control subjects were asked to imagine what they would see happening in the operating room when doctors resuscitate a cardiac-arrest patient, two of them could not give any description at all, and twenty among the remaining twenty-three made major errors. In marked contrast, of the thirty-two subjects who reported having NDEs, twenty-six gave general descriptions that did not include any major errors, and six gave very detailed reports that exactly matched their medical records, which they had not seen. Based on this study, Sabom concluded, "These NDE accounts most likely are not subtle fabrications based on prior general knowledge."

Could the subjects have been partially conscious and thus have acquired this information through sounds and touches?

This hypothesis fails to explain the NDE cases in which the subjects provide accurate information from outside their immediate vicinity, information they could not have obtained from sounds and touches or by any normal means even if they were conscious.

Sabom reports a case in which a patient recovering from sickness suffered an unexpected cardiac arrest. After he was revived, he reported that he had an OBE in which he had traveled down the hall and saw his wife, eldest son, and daughter arriving there, which was what had actually happened. This information is highly significant because (1) as he was soon to be discharged, he was not expecting his family members to visit; (2) even if he had known they would be visiting him, he couldn't have known who would be visiting because he had six grown children, who took turns accompanying their mother when she came to see him; (3) his family members were stopped in the hall ten doors away from the room where he was being worked on by the doctors and nurses; (4) his face was turned away from them; and (5) he was in the middle of being resuscitated from cardiac arrest.

NDEs involving unconscious patients giving accurate information from beyond their vicinity have been reported for more than half a century, as indicated in Hornell Hart's article published in *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research (Vol. 48, No. 4).*

Hallucinations	NDEs
generally comprise hazy visions of disorderly events.	generally comprise clear perceptions of orderly events.
usually leave their subjects feeling disturbed and agitated.	usually leave their subjects feeling peaceful and serene.
have little noteworthy long-term effect on the subjects.	are often profoundly life-transforming, inspiring the subjects toward a more purposeful and spiritual reorientation of beliefs and lifestyle.

Real Hallucinations

Could these experiences simply be hallucinations of people wanting to avoid fear of death? NDEs are markedly different from hallucinations in their contents and effects, as is evident from the table at left: NDEs differ from hallucinations not only in their experiential aspects, but also in their scientific causative mechanism. In an article in the medical magazine *The Lancet,* Pim van Lommel and his Dutch co-researchers expose a fatal flaw in all such physiological explanations of NDEs: "With a purely physiological explanation [for NDE] such as cerebral anoxia for the experience, most patients who have been clinically dead should report one." Lommel points out that among all the people under similar hallucinogenic or physiological conditions, only some undergo NDEs. This selectiveness of NDEs shows they are not hallucinations and are not caused by any physiological conditions.

Add the compelling fact that many NDE subjects give accurate information that could never have been obtained through hallucinations, and the hallucination hypothesis about NDEs can be safely buried deep under the ground.

Outside-the-Box Thinking On Out-of-Body Experiences

NDE research is not restricted to a few non-mainstream scientists; hundreds of scientists all over the globe are engaged in NDE research in serious global forums like The International Association for Near-Death Studies (IANDS) and peer-reviewed publications like *The Journal of Near-Death Studies.*

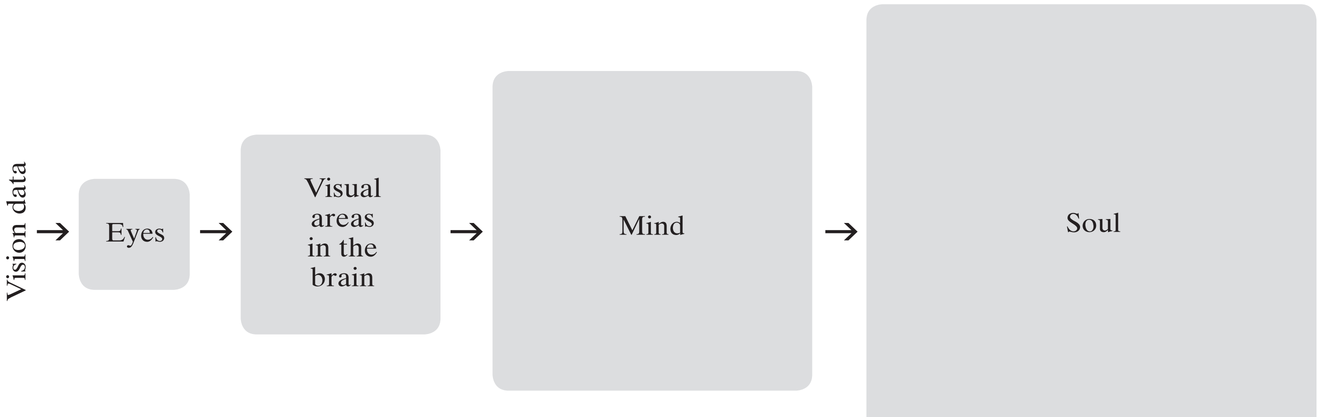
If consciousness were emerging from the brain, as mainstream science would have us believe, then an unconscious person could not have:

1. A clear thought process
2. Knowledge of his or her surroundings
3. Knowledge beyond his or her surroundings.

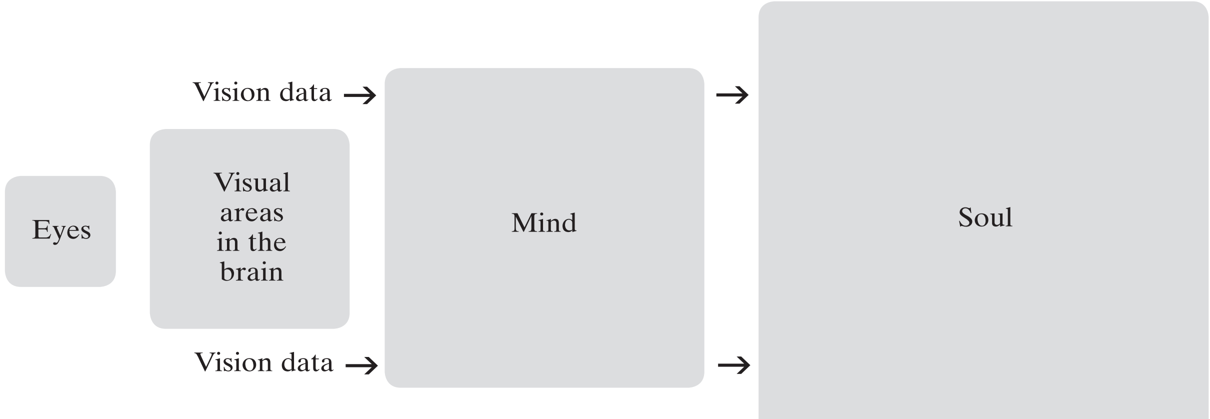
But NDEs show that what is theoretically impossible has actually happened, as has been documented by rigorous researchers under well-monitored conditions. In science the purpose of theory is to explain the facts, not to quarrel with them. The facts of NDEs strongly disprove the theory of the cerebral origin of consciousness. Indeed, just one of the hundreds of NDE cases is enough to disprove that theory; if even one person's consciousness continues when his brain is nonfunctional, then that one case proves that consciousness does not originate from the brain.

Then from where does consciousness originate? Taking the question further, who is perceiving from outside the body during OBEs? Seeking answers to questions like these, cutting-edge researchers are courageously thinking outside the box of materialistic, reductionistic science to explore alternative scientific explanations. Vedic books like the *Bhagavad-gītā* offer a promising way out of the box with their penetrating insights into the source of consciousness and the mechanism of interaction between the body and the soul.

The *Gītā* (2.17) explains that the soul pervades the body with



Experience of Normal Vision



Experience of Vision in OBE and NDE

consciousness and is indestructible, thus implying that the soul continues to exist when the body is dead or nearly dead. Further, the *Gītā* (13.34) elaborates that consciousness, the energy of the soul, pervades the body just as sunlight, the energy of the sun, pervades the universe. The consciousness of the embodied soul is channeled through two kinds of body: gross and subtle. The gross or visible body is what we normally call our physical body, and the subtle body mainly comprises what we normally call the mind. Usually, the soul's consciousness is channeled through the mind to the brain, the body, and the external world.

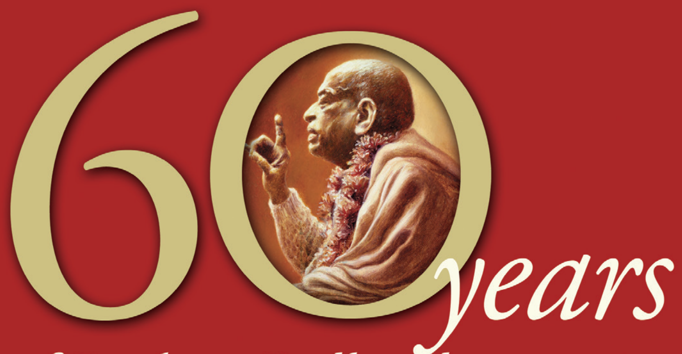
But because the soul and the body are essentially different, the soul can separate from the body under special circumstances, like when the body is damaged in OBEs. Upon such separation, the accuracy of the perceptions during the OBEs strongly suggests that the soul continues to be conscious through the subtle body even when the brain is dysfunctional. (This mechanism is depicted at left.)

A Holistic Explanation And a Holistic Life

A good scientific theory explains coherently not only the phenomenon it is intended to explain, but also other related phenomena. The soundness of the Vedic soul theory is evident from its ability to explain not only NDEs and OBEs, but also related phenomena like mindsight. In his book *Mindsight: Near-Death and Out-of-Body Experiences in the Blind,* Kenneth Ring describes many blind people who were able to see only during their NDEs and never again. The Vedic texts explain that the embodied soul sees with the aid of the mind and the eye mechanism. For the blind, the eye mechanism is impaired, but as souls, they still have the power to see. When their subtle body is decoupled from the gross body in OBEs, the subtle eye, no longer obstructed by the dysfunctional gross eye, is able to see. Similarly, the Vedic paradigm can also explain many other paranormal phenomena, such as telepathy, clairvoyance, and clairaudience.

NDEs offer a dramatic and authentic scientific demonstration that consciousness is not dependent on the brain and life is not dependent on the material body. By giving some of us experiences of life beyond the perishable body, the NDEs beckon all of us to strive for the complete experience of eternity. The *Bhagavad-gītā* offers a systematic and practical method to experience our own innate spirituality and thus reclaim our lost right to eternal life. Indeed, the import of the NDEs resonates with the universal message of the Vedic scriptures to reclaim the eternal life that is our eternal birthright. *Mṛtyur ma amṛtaṁ gama:* "Go from death to eternity."

Caitanya Caraṇa Dāsa is a disciple of His Holiness Rādhānātha Swami. He holds a degree in electronic and telecommunications engineering and serves full time at ISKCON Pune. His free ezine, "The Spiritual Scientist," gives a scientific presentation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He is the author of eight books, including the upcoming Solving the Reincarnation Puzzle*, from which this article is adapted. To read his other articles and to subscribe to his free ezine, register at www.thespiritualscientist.com.*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In your own

Choose a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and explain why it inspires you.

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
ahaṁ bhakta-parādhīno
hy asvatantra iva dvija
sādhubhir grasta-hṛdayo
bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyaḥ

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead said to the *brāhmaṇa:* I am completely under the control of My devotees. Indeed, I am not at all independent. Because My devotees are completely devoid of material desires, I sit only within the cores of their hearts. What to speak of My devotee, even those who are devotees of My devotee are very dear to Me." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.4.63)

I am inspired by the declaration of the Supreme Personality of Godhead that He is completely under the control of His devotees. Durvāsā Muni, whom the Lord is addressing in this verse, had committed an offense against the great devotee Ambarīṣa Mahārāja. Since the Lord cannot tolerate an offense committed against His devotees, He Himself came under the subordination of Ambarīṣa.

But then, Ambarīṣa was not a solitary example; the Lord became the servitor of other devotees as well. He served Yudhiṣṭhira as his messenger in the court of Hastinapur and served Arjuna as a charioteer in the Kurukshetra war. He was under the beck and call of Draupadī.

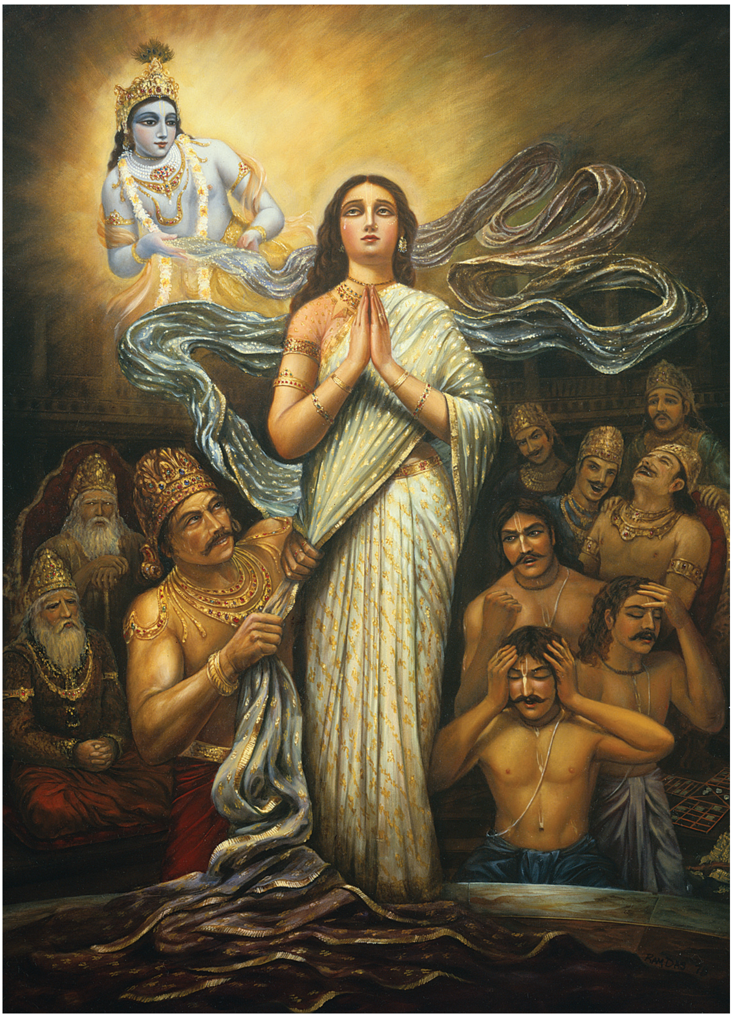
I feel all the more inspired to see how ISKCON has captured the philosophy of this verse. With its team of dedicated spiritual masters who are initiating new disciples, ISKCON is creating devotees of devotees, who are very dear to the Lord.

Rāsa Puruṣa Dāsa
Mumbai, India

tat te 'nukampāṁ su-samīkṣamāṇo
bhuñjāna evātma-kṛtaṁ vipākam
hṛd-vāg-vapurbhir vidadhan namas te
jīveta yo mukti-pade sa dāya-bhāk

"My dear Lord, one who earnestly waits for You to bestow Your causeless mercy upon him, all the while patiently suffering the reactions of his past misdeeds and offering You respectful obeisances with his heart, words, and body, is surely eligible for liberation, for it has become his rightful claim." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.8)

I look upon this verse as a ray of sunshine. It never fails to instill new hope in me. It warms my heart and strength-



Painting by Rāmadāsa Abhirāma Dāsa

When the Kurus try to disrobe Draupadī, Lord Kṛṣṇa supplies her an unlimited sari to protect her chastity.

Painting by Parīkṣit Dāsa

Pursued by Lor
seeks ref

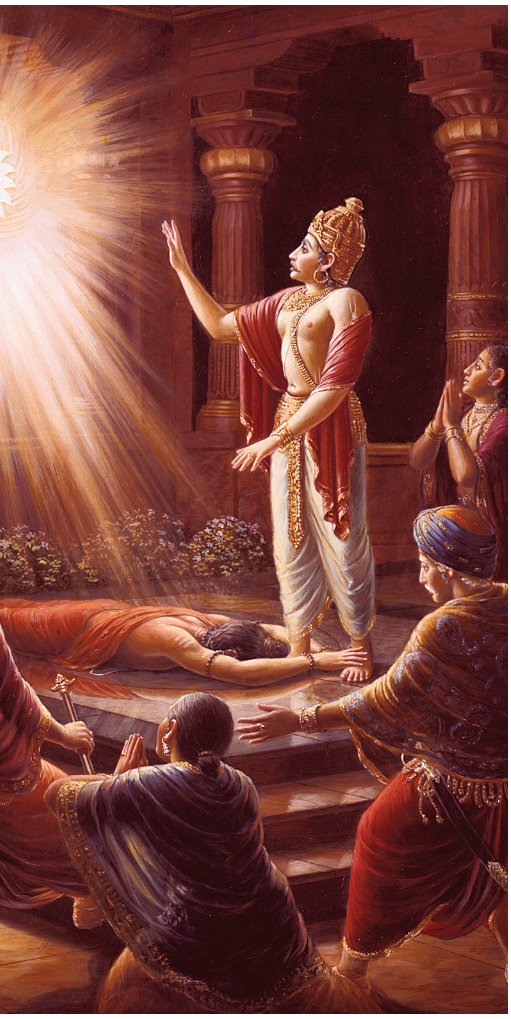
words . . .

Pentip photo: Andrea Leone | Agency: Dreamstime.com

ens my faith in the process of devotional service. As a deeply conditioned soul, far from spontaneous attraction for Kṛṣṇa, I derive great solace from this verse, which promises that in order to inherit his father's property, a son simply has to remain alive; in the same way, we only have to remain alive in Kṛṣṇa consciousness to achieve our goal.

If somehow I can remain on the path, in the right consciousness, and not be inclined to deviate, then I will surely reach my destination. In a nutshell this verse offers me the simple and perfect way by which I can steer my life clear of obstacles and pitfalls, provided I stick to the formula.

Vṛndādevī Dāsī
Rugby, Warwickshire, UK



d Kṛṣṇa's Sudarśana disc, Druvāsā Muni
uge at the feet of King Ambarīṣa.

sa vai puṁsāṁ paro dharmo
yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihatā
yayātmā suprasīdati

"The supreme occupation [dharma] for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.6)

This verse inspires me because it gives a very universal idea of religion that can bring all the faithful people in the world together under the banner of pure devotional service to the Supreme Lord. It also gives the secret to satisfying our soul—unmotivated and uninterrupted service to the Lord. If we are dissatisfied, we can ask ourselves, "Is there some motivation behind my devotional service? Is there some interruption in my devotional service?" By removing the interruptions and false motives in our devotional service to the Lord, who is called Kṛṣṇa because He is all-attractive, we can attain the eternal satisfaction of the soul that we all desire.

Kṛṣṇa-kṛpā Dāsa
Gainesville, Florida

kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann
asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ
kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya
mukta-saṅgaḥ paraṁ vrajet

"My dear King, although Kali-yuga is an ocean of faults, there is still one good quality about this age: Simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra,* one can become free from material bondage and be promoted to the transcendental kingdom." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.3.51)

The average life span of human beings in Satya-yuga is 100,000 years, in Tretā-yuga it is 10,000 years, in Dvāpara-yuga it is 1,000 years, and in Kali-yuga it is 100 years at most. It is further stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (12.3.52) that whatever result was obtained through meditating for thousands of years in Satya-yuga, performing sacrifices for thousands of years in Tretā-yuga, or serving the lotus feet of the Lord for hundreds of years in Dvāpara-yuga can be achieved by simply chanting the *mahā-mantra* in Kali-yuga. Since we are in Kali-yuga presently, we should grab this rare opportunity to free ourselves from material bondage and go to Kṛṣṇa-loka by chanting the *mahā-mantra:* Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Vaikuṇṭheśvara Bālājī Dāsa
Austin, Texas

HERE'S THE NEXT QUESTION:

Choose a particular problem in the world and explain how the Kṛṣṇa conscious way of life would help solve it.

Go to Krishna.com/in-your-own-words and let us know. Please keep your answer to under 150 words. Replies will appear in the Jan/Feb 2012 issue. Deadline for submissions is Nov 1.

THE ETERNALLY LIMITLESS
And Me

A mental journey leading to the conclusion that existence is unlimited finds support in the Vedic scriptures.

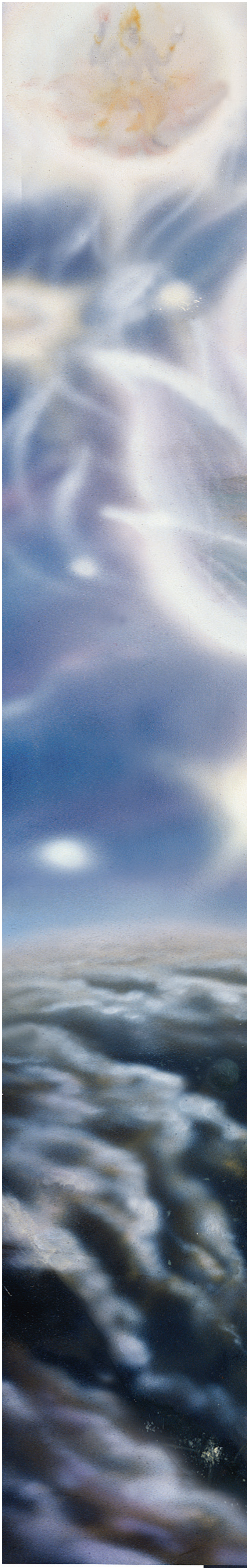
By Abhijit Toley

FROM EARLY childhood I wondered where the limit of the universe might be. At night, as the stars twinkled enigmatically overhead and the moon majestically presided over the celestial assembly, I pondered what lies beyond this universe.

Suppose I ventured out into the enchanting night sky and some fine hour reached its limit. What would I find beyond it? If I ever found the boundary, I'd be able to distinguish between the two sides: inside the boundary, and beyond it. With the spirit of adventure and the anticipation of new discoveries, I would continue my journey. But then I might come across another boundary, and another, and another. Either I'd keep finding boundaries, or after a certain number of boundaries, I'd never find the next one. In either case, I concluded, I would never find a boundary beyond which existence ceased. Existence is unlimited. That idea seemed incomprehensible to me, but undeniable.

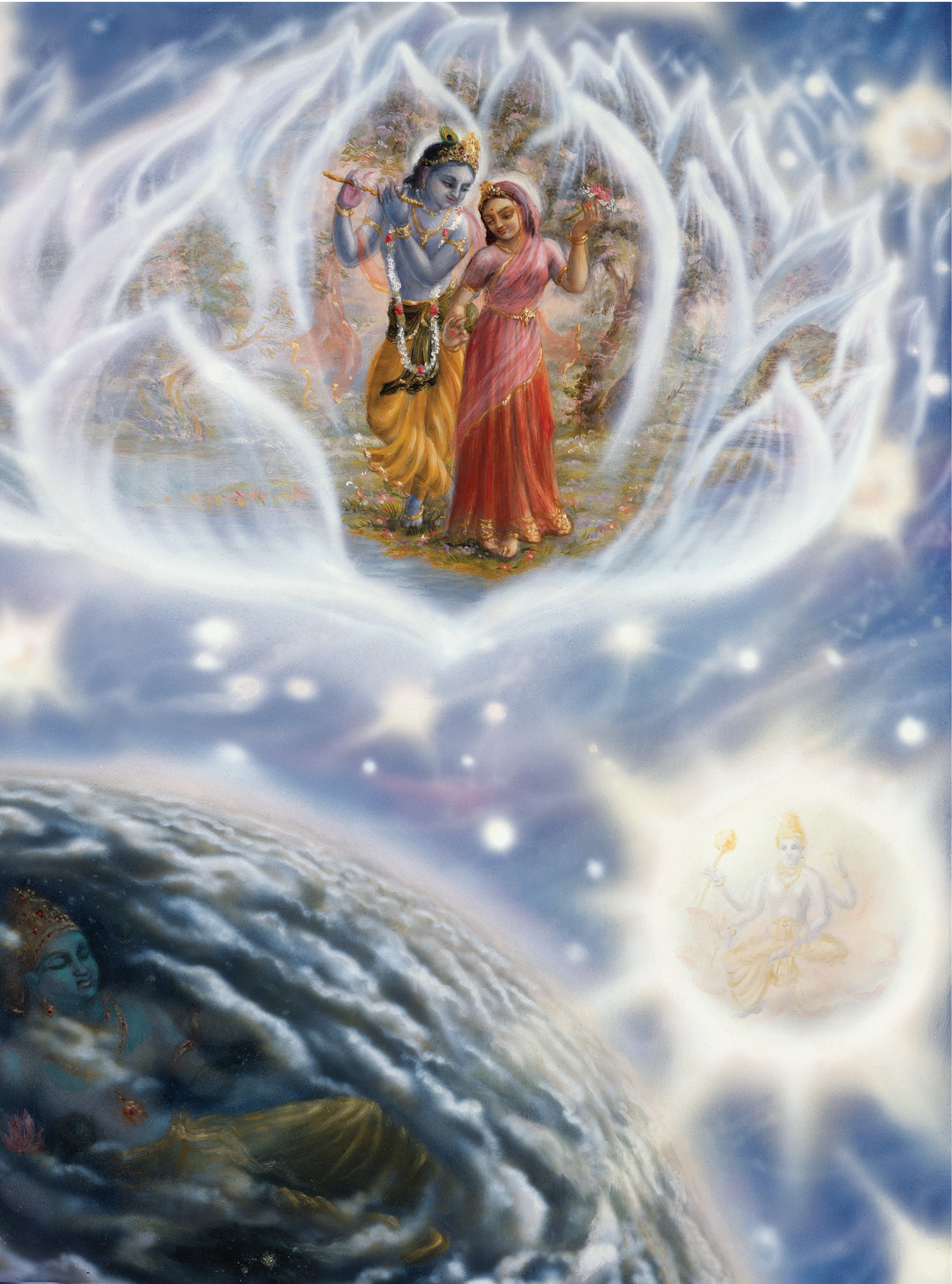
My childhood mental journeys were all but forgotten till I came across the profound Vedic wisdom, which addresses the fundamental questions whose perplexity discourages many from all but token enquiry. We read in the Vedic scriptures that existence is indeed unlimited, even though the universe we live in has a boundary. The universe is shaped like a sphere and covered by layers of material elements, like earth, water, fire, and air. The sky we see at night is inside this universe and can be called the material sky. But beyond this limited universe is the unlimited existence of the spiritual sky, which has no limits. In one corner of that spiritual sky rests the whole material creation, with countless material universes, one of which we presently live in. In the unlimited spiritual sky are innumerable unlimited spiritual planets, called Vaikuṇṭhas, on which the Supreme Lord resides in His unlimited all-powerful forms along with His uncountable loving devotees. There they enjoy unlimited loving pastimes, experiencing ever increasing and ever fresh happiness.

Lord Brahmā to Śrī Kṛṣṇa: "What am I, a small creature measuring seven spans of my own hand? I am enclosed in a potlike universe composed of material nature, the total material energy, false ego, ether, air, water, and earth. And what is Your glory?



Right: Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa reside in Their own planet above countless other spiritual planets ruled by Kṛṣṇa's Viṣṇu expansions. His Mahā-Viṣṇu form lies within the total material energy, and innumerable universes emanate from the pores of His transcendental body.

Painting by Rāmadāsa Abhirāma Dāsa



Unlimited universes pass through the pores of Your body just as particles of dust pass through the openings of a screened window." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.11)

Caitanya Mahāprabhu explains: "The spiritual sky, which is full in all six opulences, is the intermediate residence of Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is there that an unlimited number of forms of Kṛṣṇa enjoy Their pastimes. Innumerable Vaikuṇṭha planets, which are just like different rooms of a treasure-house, are all there, filled with all opulences. Those unlimited planets house the Lord's eternal associates, who are also enriched with the six opulences." (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya* 21.48–49)

Our mental excursions can never give us any details about the nature of the transcendental Absolute Truth.

In today's scientific age, there is a strong emphasis on gaining knowledge through experiments whose results are tangible to the gross senses. If something is beyond direct sense perception, then we try to come to logical conclusions based on the data we obtain through our senses. However, since the senses are inherently imperfect (e.g., we can experience only the light within a certain band of frequencies), any knowledge they can provide is imperfect. In the face of this, one is left with no option but to accept and follow some higher authority that promises knowledge unapproachable by mere gross senses. The holy scriptures are one such authority. While our mental excursions can lead us to some conclusions, they can never give us any details about the nature of the transcendent Absolute Truth. On the other hand, the revealed scriptures, such as the Vedic literature quoted above, have not only acknowledged the fundamental questions, such as those about existence, but have authoritatively provided answers to them in great detail and clarity. Such deep insight is possible only because Vedic literature is not of mundane origin but is *apauruṣeya,* of divine origin. As stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.1.1), at the beginning of the creation of the universe, the perfect authority, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, imparted the complete Vedic knowledge to Brahmā from within his heart.

Looking for the Source

Another question I wondered about as a child is the origin of everything. Each thing in our experience has a source, but what is the source of everything? And when did everything start coming into being? I did some thought experiments and arrived at this: For there to be an instant in time when existence came into being, there would have to be a time when existence was absent. That is, at time t, there was nonexistence—nothing existed. And then, out of nowhere, literally, at time $t + dt$, voila! There was existence! Existence came out of nonexistence. This, I was convinced beyond doubt, is not possible. So, what's the alternative explanation? The only alternative is that there is existence eternally, for all time instants t. Since we are certain that there is existence, and that existence cannot crop out of nonexistence, existence is eternal.

The source of everything, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, exists eternally and doesn't depend on anything else for His existence. He says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.8), "I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who perfectly know this engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts."

So, existence is not only unlimited, but also eternal. Eternally unlimited existence. Again, incomprehensible, but undeniable. The Vedic scriptures confirm this as follows. The Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and His energies exist eternally and simultaneously. Just as the sun and sunlight exist simultaneously (the sun being the source), so the Lord and His energies exist simultaneously (the Lord being their source). One of the Lord's energies is the material energy, of which the material universes are made. This energy is also eternal, but its different manifestations are temporary. Therefore, everything inside this universe and the universe itself is temporary, being temporary manifestations of the eternal material energy of the Lord. The time scales might vary astronomically; some manifestations exist for a few minutes, while some, like this universe, exist for trillions of years. But in any case, all are temporary. And they are hopelessly insignificant in size and duration when compared to the eternally unlimited nature of existence.

Is My Existence Limited?

The next question I pondered, especially after finding myself lost inside eternal limitlessness, was about my own existence. If my existence is limited to the eighty-odd years of the existence of my body, then nothing of this world is of any significance at all. What is eighty years compared to eternity? All human endeavors, philosophy, morality, achievement, emotions, aspirations, philanthropy—everything—is just plain insignificant. All discussions on any matter whatsoever are insignificant. Right and wrong, justice and injustice, independence and slavery, this philosophy or that, sports, politics, showbiz, likes and dislikes, virtue and sin—nothing is any more significant than an invisible harmless speck of dust compared to the vast desert. And therefore, I could resign myself to doing whatever I like for the hopelessly limited expanse of my existence.

But what about the other possibility? What if my existence is not limited to just this one lifetime? What if it extends to many lifetimes? What if it is eternal? If so, then how I lead my life becomes an important question because I don't want to be uncomfortable for any significant length of time. How should I act so that my existence is comfortable and happy?

The Vedic scriptures assert, and base their teachings on, the fundamental understanding that life is eternal. All living beings, called souls (*ātmān*), have existed eternally and will continue to exist eternally.

Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "For the soul there is neither birth nor death at any time. He has not come into being, does not come into being, and will not come into being. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.20)

Forgetful Souls

The souls' original home is one of the spiritual planets, and they have an eternal relationship of love with the Lord. The souls are thus meant for an eternal life of happiness and enjoyment experienced through spiritual senses by lovingly serving the Lord in the spiritual planets. The souls who desired an existence independent of the Lord were kindly provided by the Lord with this material world, with a material body to interact with the material world, and with the forgetfulness of their true identity. Thus, typically, the souls in the material universes are forgetful of their original position as an eternal loving associate of the Supreme Lord. However, because the souls have known sublime love and happiness in the spiritual world, they seek the same experience in the material world. Averse to serving anyone else, they develop the notion that they can achieve happiness only by gratifying their own mind and senses. Thus, in the quest for unlimited happiness through the temporary and limited material senses, they either resign to frustration (tolerating it or venting it), or they start exploiting others for their own selfish desires. In any case, the temporary and limited material senses, by interaction with the objects of this material world, can never taste the happiness the soul tastes through spiritual senses by loving service to the Lord. This situation is, in a nutshell, the cause of all the ills of this material world.

Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "The living entities in this conditioned world are My eternal fragmental parts. Due to conditioned life, they are struggling very hard with the six senses, which include the mind." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 15.7)

Thus, the root cause of all misery is that we are, of our own volition, looking for happiness in the wrong place. Unless we engage our mind and senses in the loving service of the Lord, the unlimited happiness we seek will never be ours. Nothing in the material world can give us that, as we can easily see by observing the lives of the richest and most materially successful people. What is the source of all lasting happiness? The *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.65–66) answers: "For one thus satisfied [in Kṛṣṇa consciousness], the threefold miseries of material existence exist no longer; in such satisfied consciousness, one's intelligence is soon well established. One who is not connected with the Supreme [in Kṛṣṇa consciousness] can have neither transcendental intelligence nor a steady mind, without which there is no possibility of peace. And how can there be any happiness without peace?"

Peace and Happiness Through Selfless Service

A satisfied and peaceful mind is the basis of lasting happiness. How do we keep our minds satisfied, especially in an age where glittering promises of instant pleasures surround us? Many of us might have found that helping others brings a sense of satisfaction to our lives. Why? The Vedic scriptures explain that the very nature of the soul is selfless service to the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Thus, because serving someone other than Kṛṣṇa resembles service to Him, it delivers a drop of the ocean of satisfaction and happiness in store for us when we start lovingly serving Kṛṣṇa directly. When we start serving Kṛṣṇa, very shortly we start

(*please turn to page 58*)

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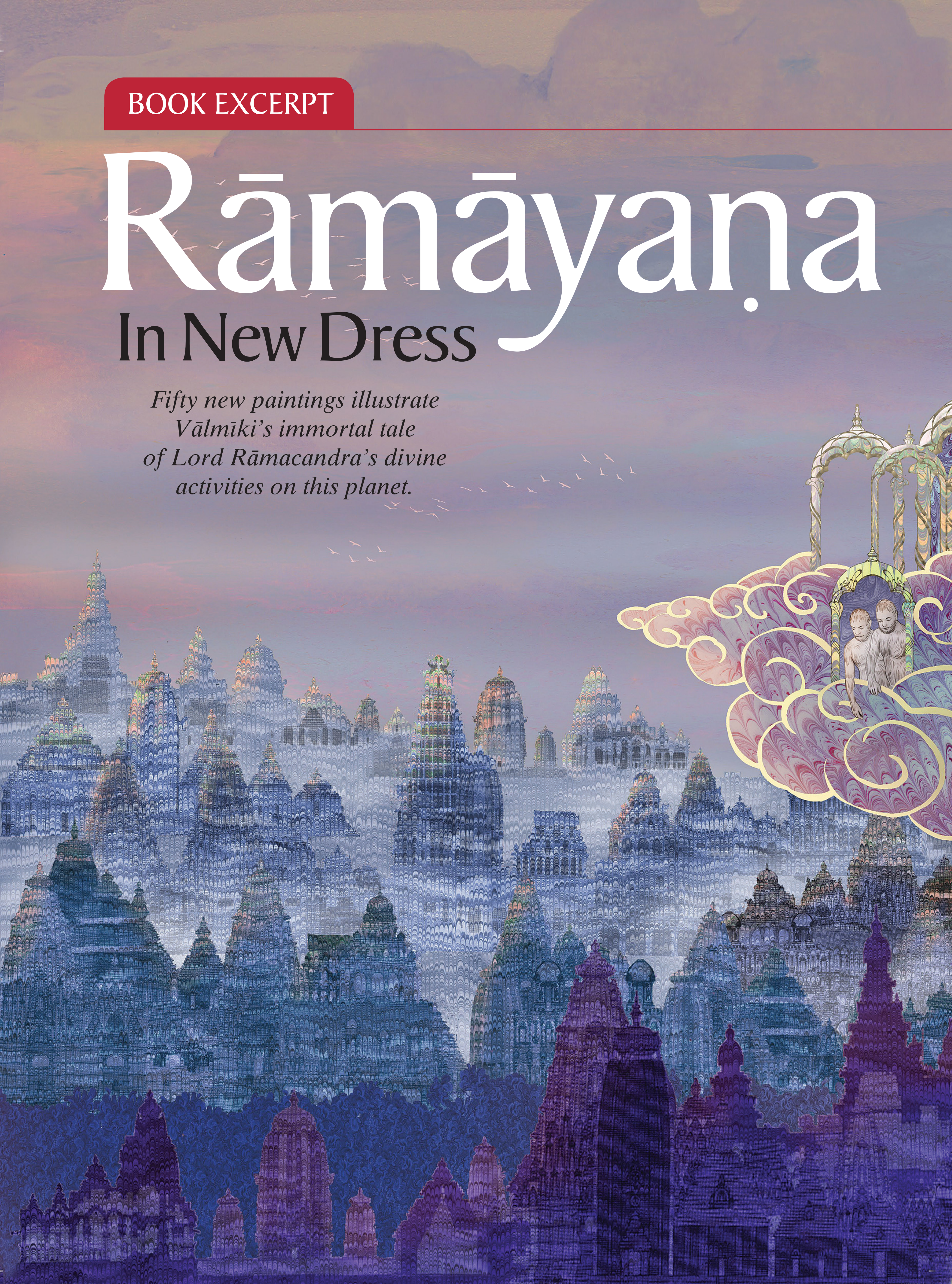
BOOK EXCERPT

Rāmāyaṇa

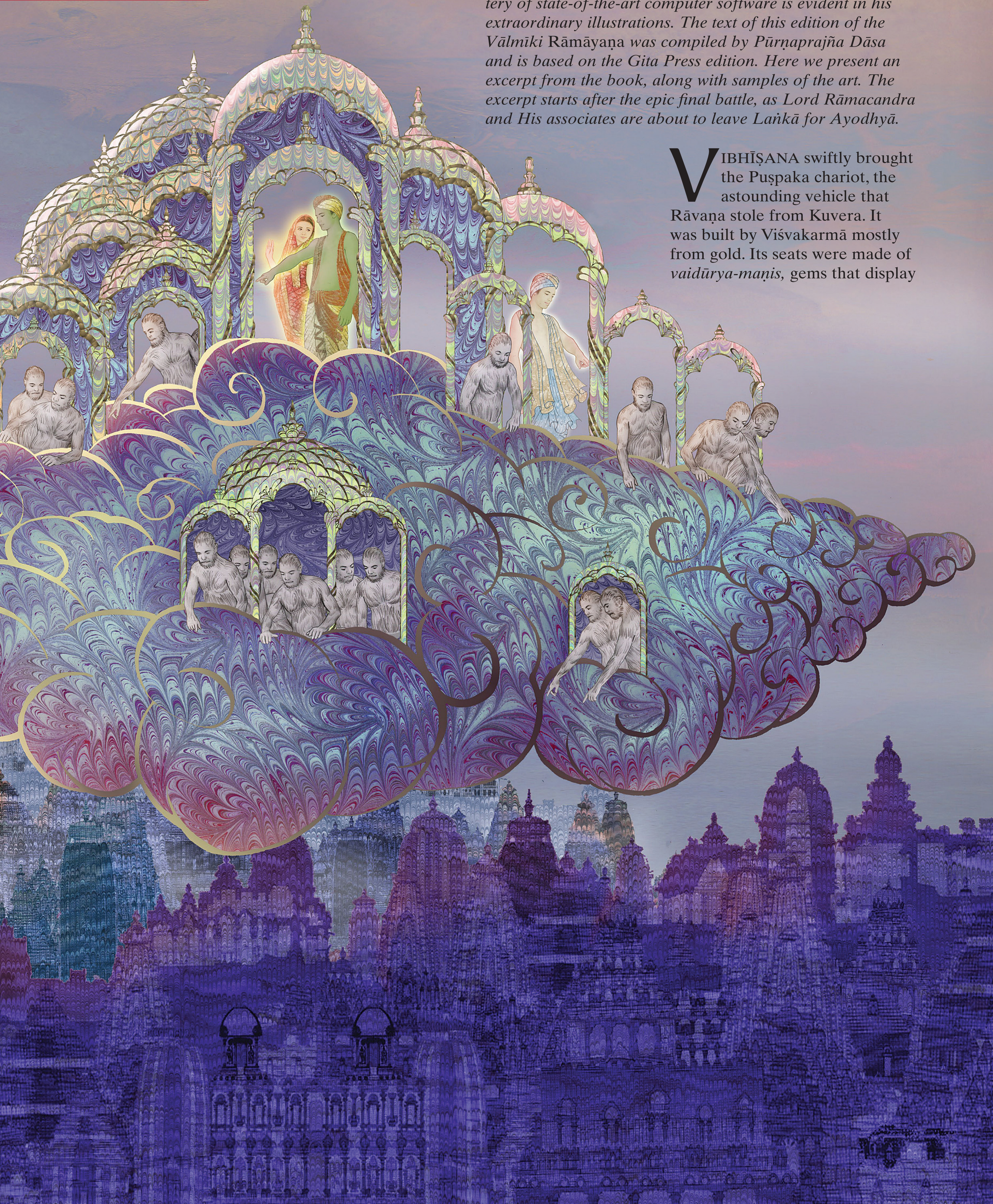
In New Dress

Fifty new paintings illustrate Vālmīki's immortal tale of Lord Rāmacandra's divine activities on this planet.

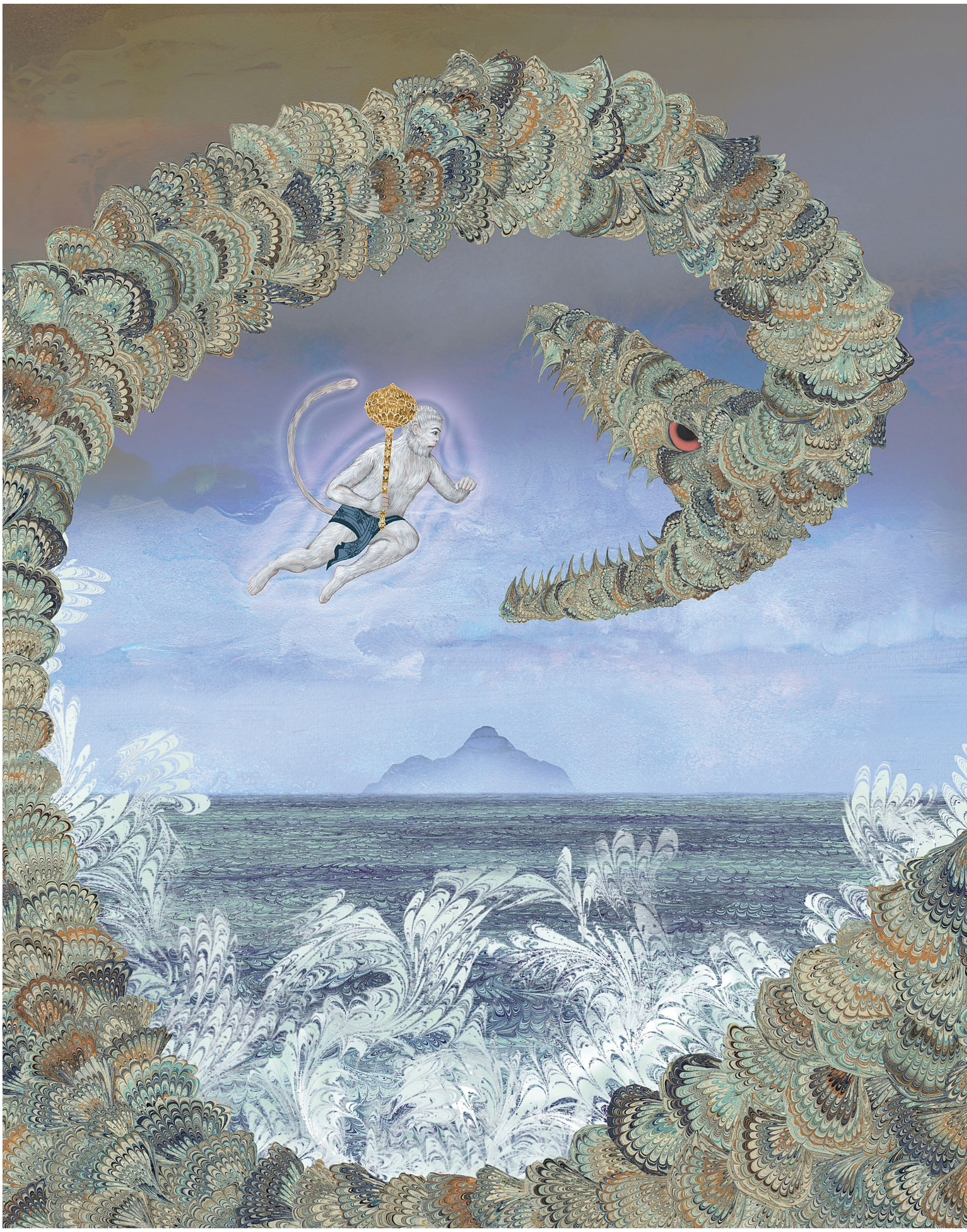


The new, abridged, edition of the Rāmāyaṇa *produced by the Mediterranean division of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust features the art of Italian artist Parama Dāsa, whose mastery of state-of-the-art computer software is evident in his extraordinary illustrations. The text of this edition of the Vālmīki* Rāmāyaṇa *was compiled by Pūrṇaprajña Dāsa and is based on the Gita Press edition. Here we present an excerpt from the book, along with samples of the art. The excerpt starts after the epic final battle, as Lord Rāmacandra and His associates are about to leave Laṅkā for Ayodhyā.*

VIBHĪṢANA swiftly brought the Puṣpaka chariot, the astounding vehicle that Rāvaṇa stole from Kuvera. It was built by Viśvakarmā mostly from gold. Its seats were made of *vaidūrya-maṇis,* gems that display



After defeating Rāvaṇa and rescuing Sītā Devī, Lord Rāmacandra, along with Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa, Hanumān, and other monkey soldiers, enters Ayodhyā, His capital city, on a celestial airplane (previous spread). At left, Garuḍa releases Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa from snake arrows fired by Indrajit, which their army fears have killed them. At right, while jumping across the ocean to Lanka, Rāvaṇa's kingdom, Hanumān enters the mouth of an attacking creature named Siṁhikā.



different colors. The mental indications of its driver were enough to direct it anywhere.

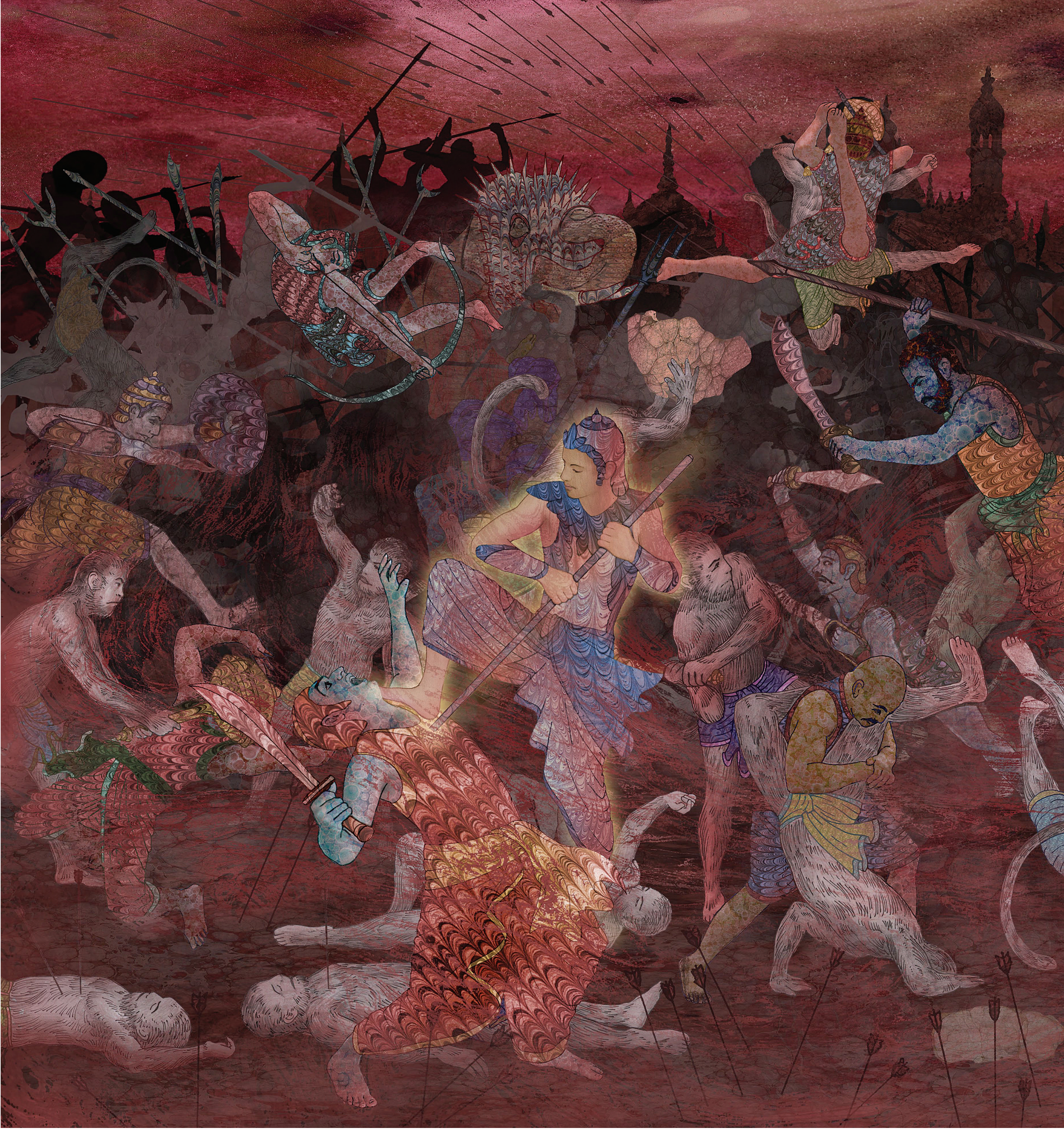
Thus the fine chariot awaited Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa's commands, and They felt astonished.

Before departing, Rāma requested Vibhīṣaṇa to give gold and jewels to all the monkey soldiers.

Mounting the Puṣpaka chariot with Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā, Rāma addressed all those around Him: "There is no way I can repay you monkey warriors for your heroic fighting on My behalf. Your unflinching devotional service will always serve as an inspiration to future devotees. Your glories will shine forever. Now please return to Kiṣkindha and live happily under Sugrīva, your king.

"Dear Vibhīṣaṇa, immediately begin governing Laṅkā, for the citizens are bereft of their king."

Standing before Rāma with joined palms, Sugrīva and Vibhīṣaṇa pleaded, "O Lord, please allow us to accompany You to Ayodhyā—we shall return home after seeing Your coronation."



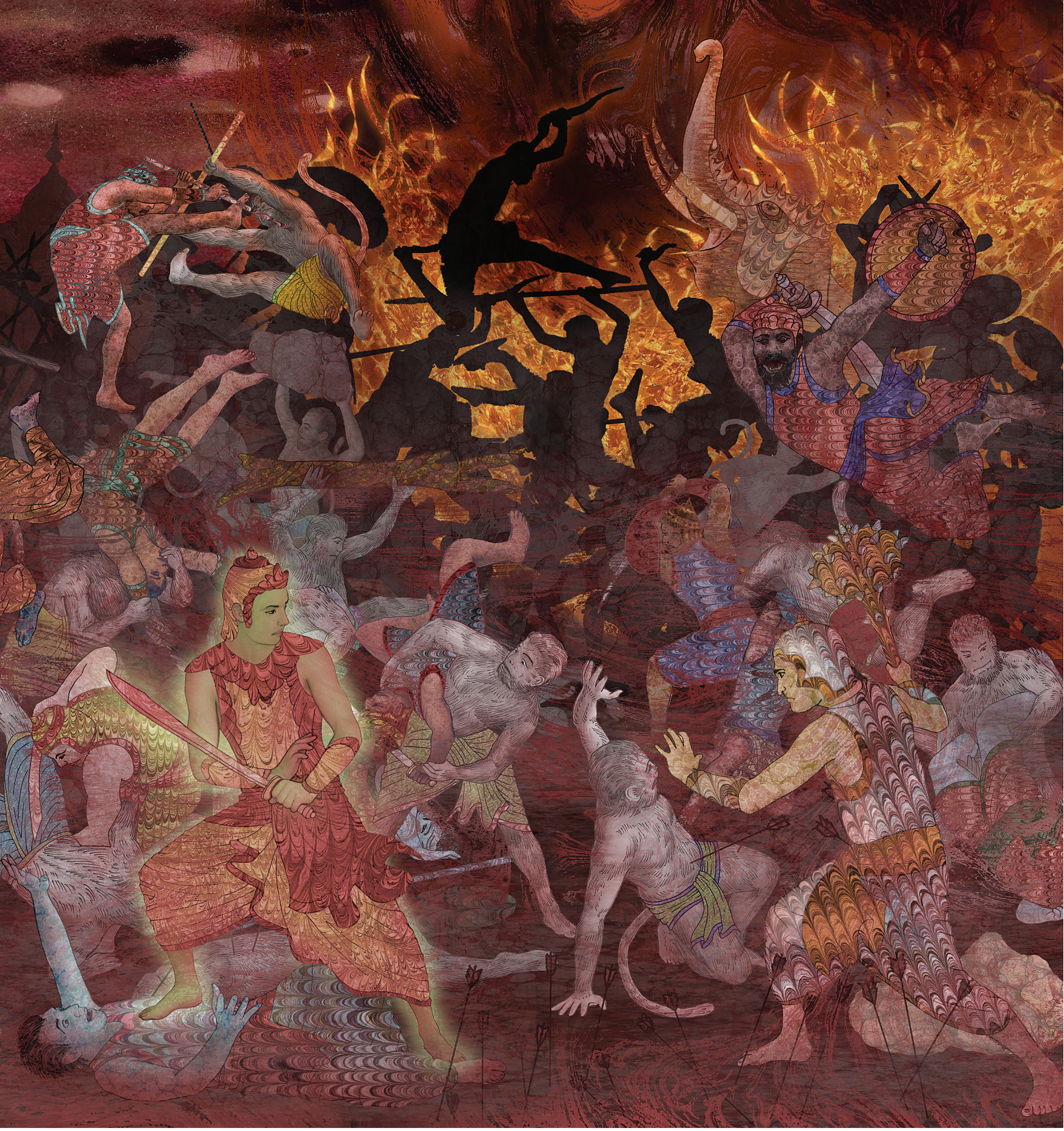
When Rāvaṇa's army of man-eating Rākṣasas attacks with various weapons, the monkeys in Lord Rāmacandra's army retaliate with trees, stones, claws, and teeth.

Rāma replied, "There is nothing that would please Me more than returning to Ayodhyā with all My dear friends. Please mount the Puṣpaka chariot, and let all the other monkeys and Rākṣasa heroes also enter."

After everyone was comfortably seated, the Puṣpaka chariot majestically lifted off.

The monkeys, bears, and Rākṣasas were enjoying the flight, while Rāma pointed out all the sights to Sītā.

Rāma said, "See the great battlefield where all the heroic Rākṣa-

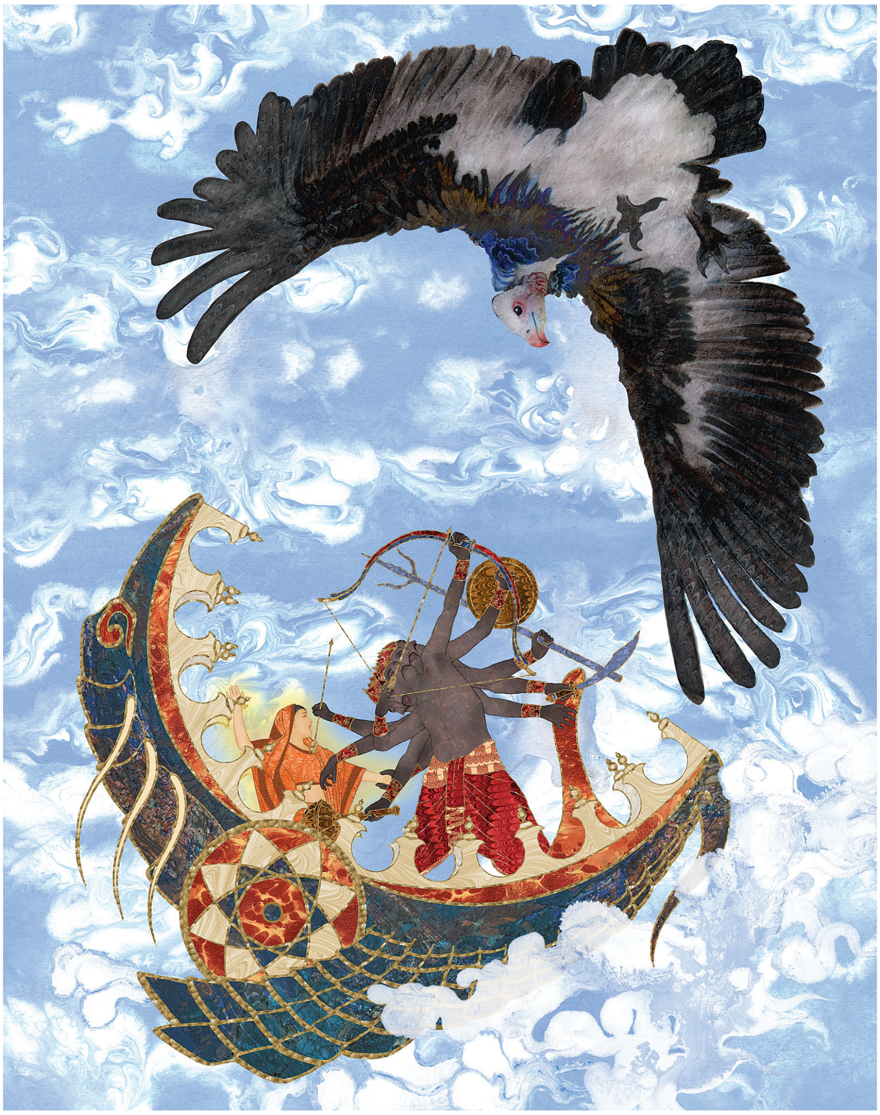


sas died for Your sake. Over there is Nalasetu, the bridge we built to cross the ocean. There, on the far shore, is Setubandha, where the construction of the bridge began. From now on, Setubandha will be a sacred place, capable of washing away all one's sinful reactions."

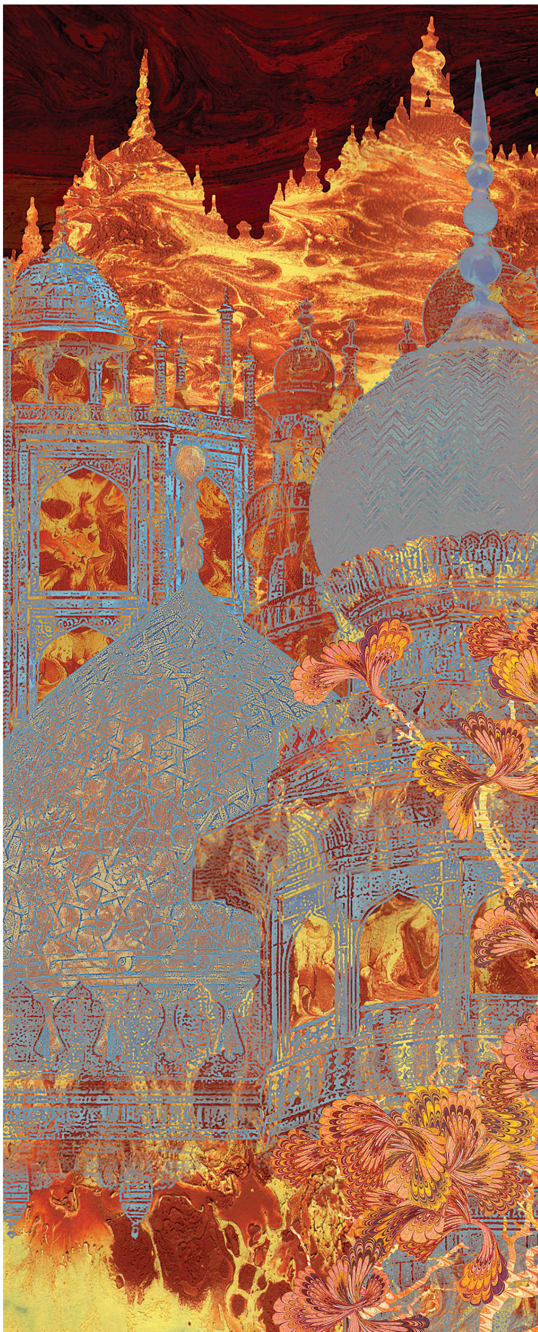
When Rāma pointed to Kiṣkindha, Sītā said, "I would be pleased if I could return to Ayodhyā with all the monkey chiefs' wives."

Rāma granted Sītā's wish, and after halting the chariot, He instructed Sugrīva and others to go and invite their wives. Once everyone was seated, the journey continued.

Rāma said, "Look, there is Mount Ṛṣyamūka, where I met Sugrīva, and nearby you can see heavenly Pampā Lake, which is full of blue lotuses. Further on, You can



Jaṭāyu challenges Rāvaṇa (left), who has kidnapped Sītā Devī and is carrying her off to Lanka. Below, after finding Sītā in Lanka, Hanumān sets fire to the city as he leaves to bring news of Sītā's discovery to Lord Rāmacandra. On the following spread, by firing divine weapons from His bow, Lord Rāma severs Kumbakarṇa's arms and head.



see the river Godāvarī, and, on its shore, Agastya Ṛṣi's *āśrama.*

"Dear Sītā, see there, the spot where Rāvaṇa kidnapped you. And there is Citrakūṭa, where Bharata met Me. There is the river Yamunā, and there the mighty Gaṅgā; see there, Śṛṅgaverapura, King Guha's capital."

In this way, Sītā, Rāma, and Lakṣmaṇa remembered Their entire forest life in reverse order as They retraced their way back to Ayodhyā. Finally, They saw the river Sarayū, and, at last, the outskirts of Ayodhyā. Before entering Ayodhyā, Rāma ordered Hanumān, "Go and inform Guha of My arrival; I will spend the night at Bharadvāja Ṛṣi's *āśrama.* And then go to Nandigrāma to describe to Bharata everything related to Sītā's abduction and rescue. Carefully watch Bharata's expression when He hears about My arrival and then report back to Me. If Bharata wants to rule the kingdom—for position, power, royal luxuries, or even because Kaikeyī urges Him to—I will be glad to grant it to Him."

Hanumān took a human form and departed through the air. He did what Rāma had ordered him and first went to Guha. Arriving at Nandigrāma, Hanumān saw Bharata with matted hair, dressed in tree bark. Bharata had been living in a cottage. He ate only fruit and roots, and He appeared to be miserable and emaciated.

Hanumān approached Bharata and said, "I have come here as Rāma's messenger. He inquires about Your welfare and announces

His swift return to Ayodhyā."

Hearing these nectarean words, Bharata's face lit up with delight. Exhilarated by deep emotions, he suddenly fainted. Coming to his senses, Bharata stood and embraced Hanumān with great joy and bathed him with tears.

Bharata said, "Because you brought me this good news, I will immediately reward you with a hundred thousand cows, a hundred villages, and sixteen girls of marriageable age. Please sit down and tell me everything that happened during Rāma's exile."

Hanumān narrated everything and revealed his identity.

Hearing about Rāma's imminent return, Bharata exclaimed, "My cherished desire will finally be fulfilled."

Bharata ordered Śatrughna to prepare everything for Rāma's reception. Sumantra and other ministers soon arrived at Nandigrāma on elephants, and Kauśalyā, Sumitrā, and Kaikeyī came on palanquins. Engineers and work crews quickly constructed a new road to connect Nandigrāma and Ayodhyā.

After all these arrangements, Bharata took up Rāma's sandals and a white royal umbrella. Accompanied by *brāhmaṇas,* He left His cottage, while conches were blown and drums beaten.

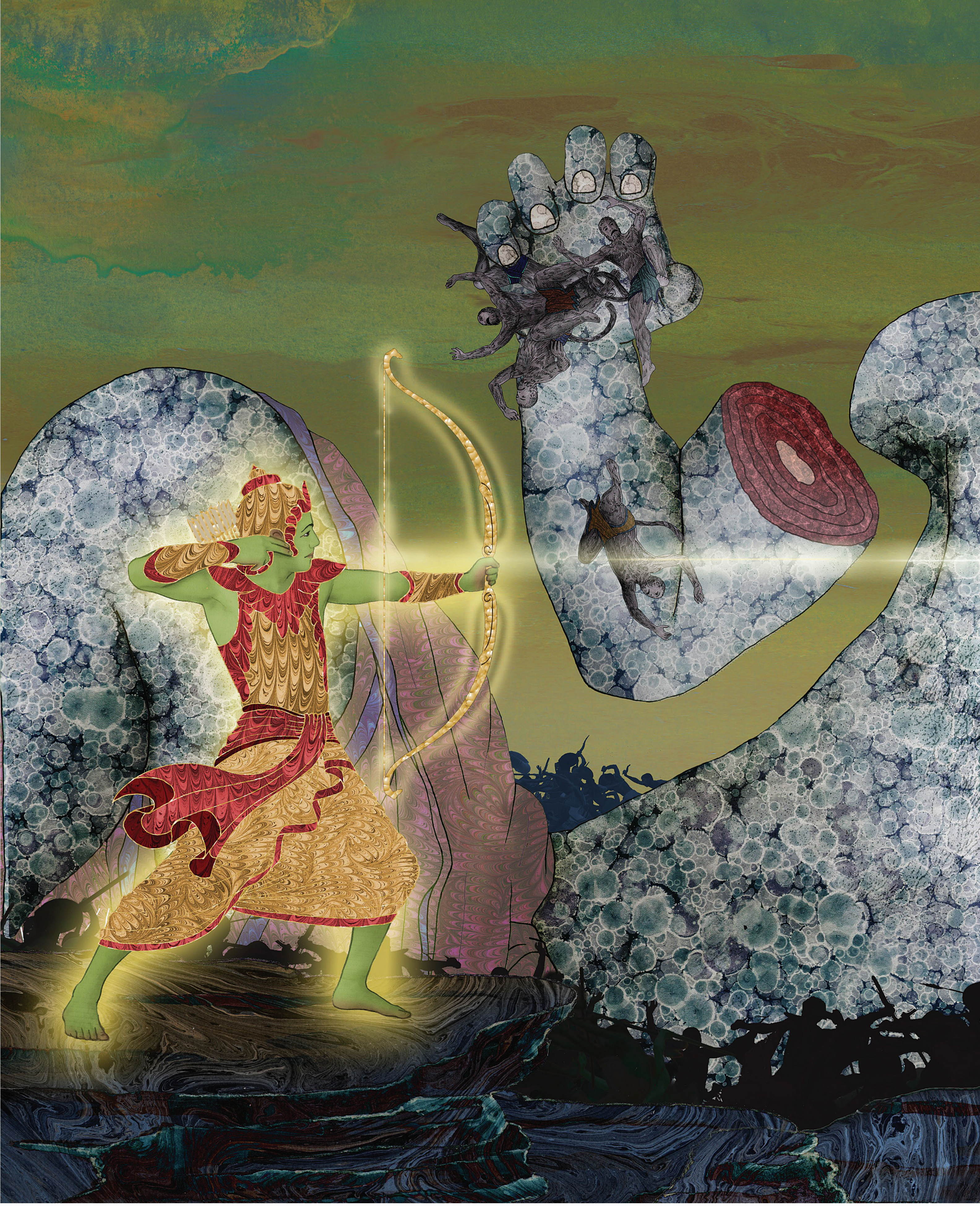
The news spread, and almost the whole of Ayodhyā, eagerly expecting Rāma, had come to Nandigrāma.

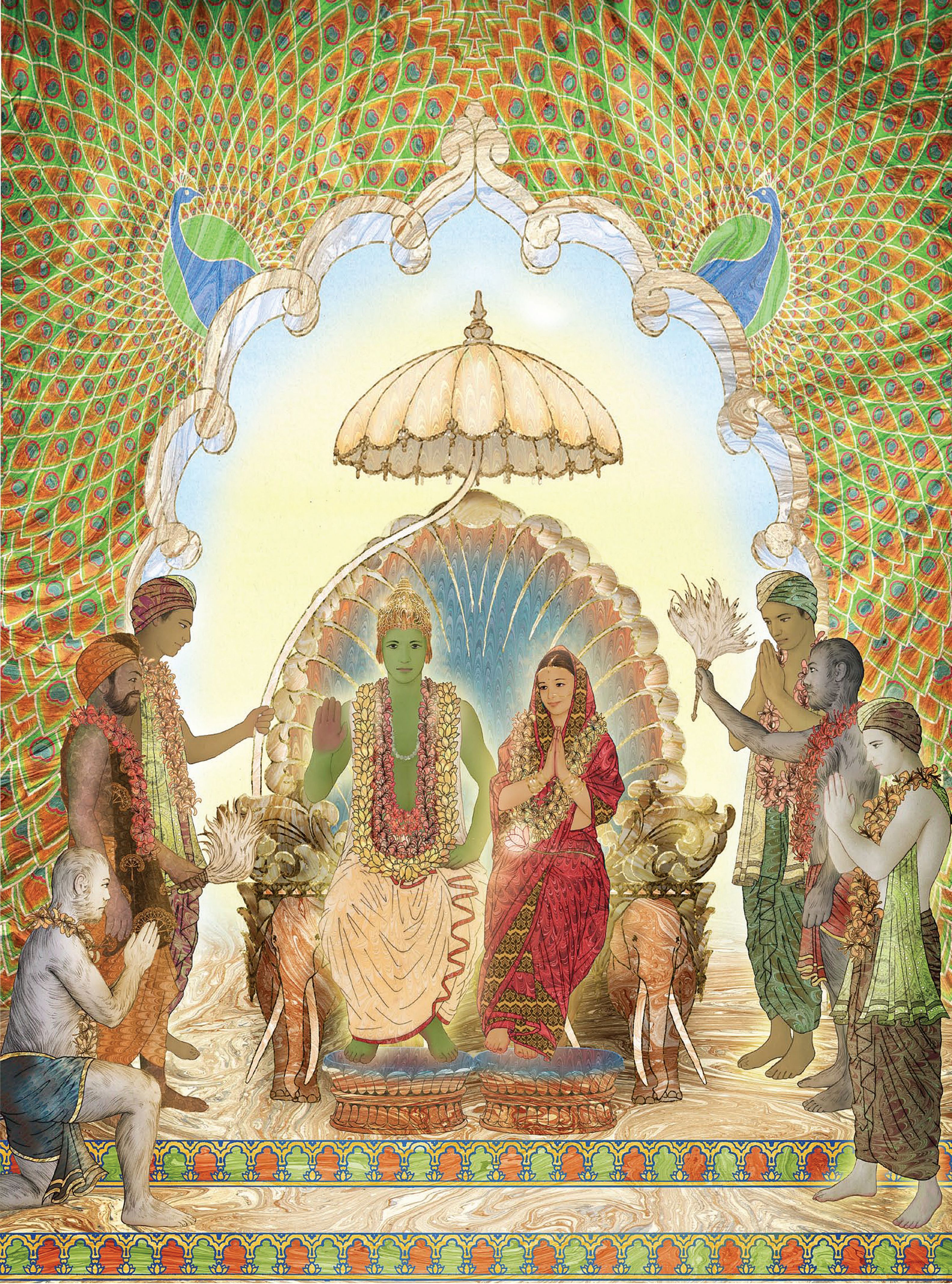
After some time, when there were no signs of Rāma's arrival, Bharata warned Hanumān, "This better not be a frivolous joke, monkey."

But Hanumān pointed to distant dust clouds—the monkeys were approaching, and their roars could now be heard.

Finally spotting the Puṣpaka chariot, Hanumān happily shouted, "Śrī Rāma comes."

A clamor arose as the crowd saw the Puṣpaka chariot appear. Out of respect, everyone dismounted his horse, elephant, or chariot, and from a distance, Bharata already started worshiping Rāma. With joined palms, He recited prayers and then offered articles. Finally, when Bharata saw Rāma magnificently aglow in the front seat, He bowed with the greatest reverence.





The celestial chariot landed, and Bharata climbed aboard to greet His elder brother. Rāma immediately rose to embrace Bharata with affection. Next, Bharata warmly greeted Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā.

Meeting and embracing Sugrīva, Bharata said, "Now you are like Our fifth brother."

In the meantime, Rāma approached Kauśalyā and lovingly clasped her feet. One after another, Rāma greeted Sumitrā, Kaikeyī, and Vasiṣṭha. Then all the citizens welcomed Rāma.

Placing Rāma's wooden shoes on Rāma's lotus feet, Bharata said, "The kingdom I have been governing in Your absence is flourishing by Your mercy, and the treasury, storehouses, and army have increased tenfold. My duty is now fulfilled, and thus I relinquish everything to You."

Rāma ordered the Puṣpaka chariot to return to Kuvera, its original owner. The vehicle ascended and headed north.

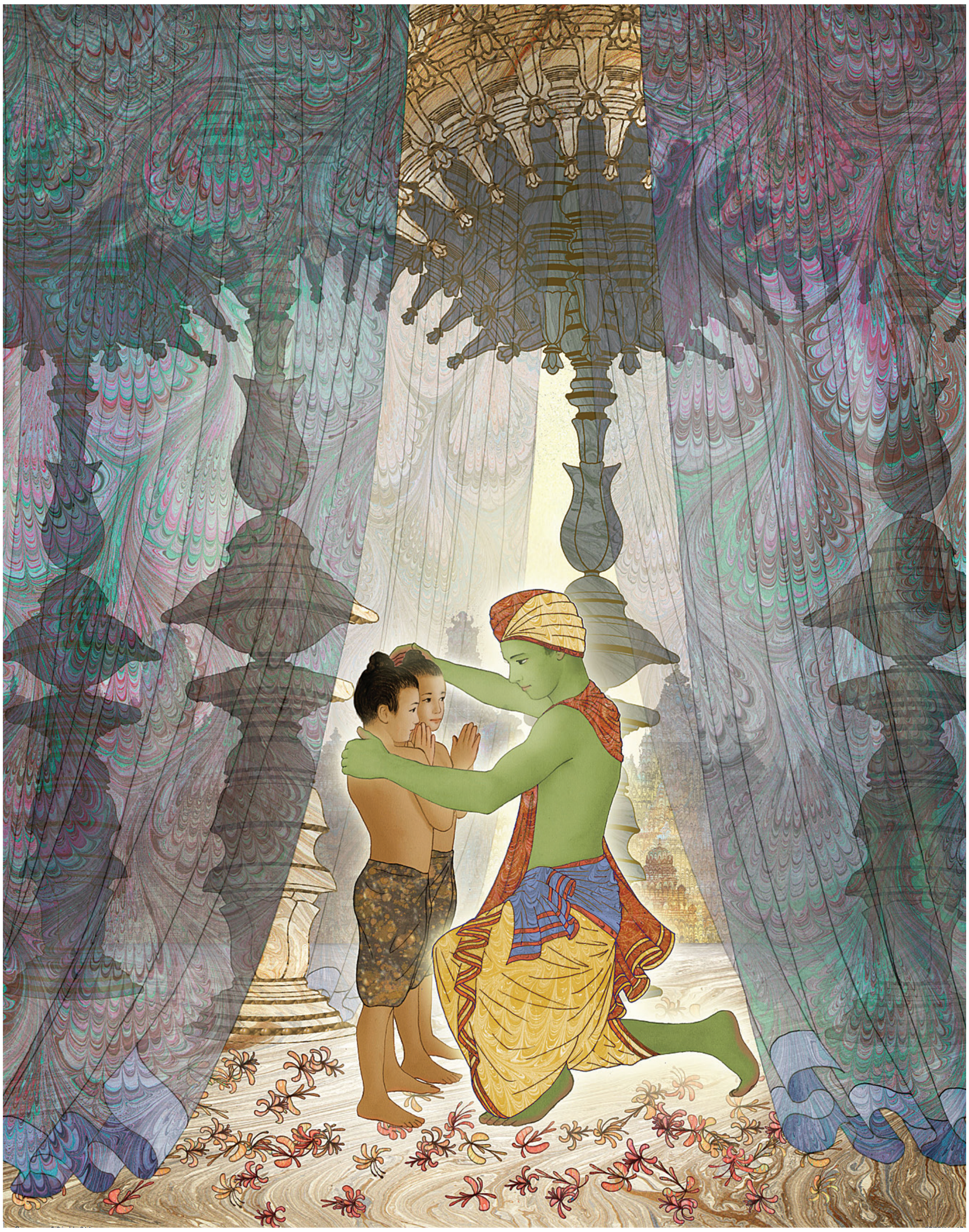
Bharata requested Rāma to accept the throne without delay and resume a life of royal luxury. Rāma consented, and barbers were summoned to shave His matted hair. Rāma bathed and dressed, and the three mothers dressed Sītā and the monkeys' wives marvelously. At Śatrughna's command, Sumantra presented a lavish chariot to Rāma, and Rāma graciously mounted it. On the chariot, Bharata held the reins and Śatrughna the royal white umbrella, and on either side of Rāma, waving fan and *cāmara,* stood Lakṣmaṇa and Vibhīṣaṇa. From the sky, demigods and sages glorified Him with carefully chosen words.

Rāma proceeded toward Ayodhyā followed by an enormous procession. When Rāma entered His capital, all the citizens lined the streets and welcomed Him. Men, women, and children—all gazed upon Rāma as if they had regained their lives. ❀

About the Artist:
Parama Dāsa was born in Gallarate, northern Italy, in 1976. His family joined the Hare Kṛṣṇa community near Florence in 1982, and he began his education in the gurukula *school there at age seven.*

Parama received his diploma from the State Art Institute in Florence in 1996, specializing in theatrical scenography. During his studies he began copying art of the Renaissance, and after graduation he worked in a restoration laboratory, where he learned classical pictorial techniques.

For ten years, beginning in 1998, he reproduced more than 150 commissioned works of the most important European artists of the period between the 1400s and the 1800s. He has also developed his own aesthetic language, combining classical and modern techniques with the latest digital technology.



After His return to Ayodhyā, Lord Rāmacandra is enthroned as king (left). At right, for the first time Lord Rāma meets His twin sons, Lava and Kuṣa, who on the order of the guru, Vālmīki, are traveling throughout the kingdom singing the glories of their father.

ETERNALLY LIMITLESS

(*continued from page 45*)

experiencing a deep sense of satisfaction and happiness. And naturally we want to share with others our good fortune of discovering real happiness.

People sometimes ask, What's the use of serving God, who doesn't really need our help, instead of serving the needy and unfortunate of this world? The answer, which you've likely figured out by now, is that every soul needs to serve God. Only by serving God can souls be as happy as they want to be.

Therefore, we should serve God for our own benefit. Moreover, having understood this fundamental truth, we would naturally want to serve others by encouraging them to also serve God and thus find true happiness in their lives. This is the only real service one can render to others; all else will just be a mere semblance of service, with no lasting positive impact, because nothing else tries to cure the root cause of all maladies. Thus, let all types of social workers carry on their good work, but also add this most important factor—spreading God consciousness—into their list of activities. With that, their endeavors will be truly successful; without that, all their endeavors are but utter failures. In the words of Prahlāda Mahārāja, an exemplary devotee of the Lord: "Persons who are strongly entrapped by the consciousness of enjoying material life, and who have therefore accepted as their leader or guru a similar blind man attached to external sense objects, cannot understand that the goal of life is to return home, back to Godhead, and engage in the service of Lord Viṣṇu. As blind men guided by another blind man miss the right path and fall into a ditch, materially attached men led by another materially attached man are bound by the ropes of fruitive labor, which are made of very strong cords, and they continue again and again in materialistic life, suffering the threefold miseries." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.5.31)

The scriptures inform those seeking happiness away from God that unlimited happiness is found only in serving Him. Thus, by knowing that one's true self-interest lies in serving God, the typically selfish soul of this world starts serving Him. And by serving God, even just for one's own benefit, one's dormant love for God awakens, transforming actions of self-interest into selfless actions of love. The soul's nature is to love and serve God, and once reinstated in that natural original consciousness, the soul just wants to serve God out of pure love. A pure devotee of God does not consider whether he himself is happy or not; his only concern is how to serve and please the Lord. The devotee's love moves Kṛṣṇa, who is all-loving, and Kṛṣṇa reciprocates in such a way that the devotee's happiness knows no bounds. Still, the pure devotee's actions are motivated not by Kṛṣṇa's reciprocation but only out of pure love. The pure devotee never seeks his own happiness; he always seeks Kṛṣṇa's service. Indeed, this is the very definition of pure love, and pure love for Kṛṣṇa is the very essence of the existence of the soul.

"This is the natural result of intense love of Godhead. The devotee does not consider personal inconveniences or impediments. In all circumstances he wants to serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya* 4.186)

Thus, the journey that started from the terrace of my house as I gazed into the lovely night sky led me beyond the boundaries of the material world into the limitless expanse of the spiritual sky. It further led me into the eternally limitless existence of the Lord and His energies. Discovering such incomprehensible vastness made me wonder about the significance of my own existence. Further excursions led me to discover the eternity of my own existence, and of my natural eternal state as a loving servant of God.

What's more, I now find myself on an even more fascinating journey—a journey from selfishness to self-interestedness to selflessness. The incomprehensible but undeniable eternal limitlessness of existence out there has led me to discover myself in here.

Abhijit Toley is a member of the congregation of ISKCON's Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kuñjabihārī Temple in Pune, India. He works as a principal software engineer with Symantec Corporation in Pune.

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Belgaum, Karnataka — 211 Shukrawar Peth, Tilak Wadi, 590 006/ Tel. (831) 2436267, 2400108, or 4204672/ iskcon.belgaum@pamho.net
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◆ **Bhubaneswar, Odisha —** N.H. No. 5, IRC Village, 751 015/ Tel. (674) 2553517, 2553475, or 2554283/ gm.iskconbbsr.ggs@pamho.net
Brahmapur, Odisha — Hare Krishna Temple, N. H. No. 5, Dist. Ganjam, 760 008/ Tel. (680) 2350100 or 9437179400/ pancharatna.gkg@pamho.net
Brahmapur, Odisha — Sri Rama Govinda Mandir, Aska Rd., at Post Ankuspur, Brahmapur, Dist. Ganjam, 761 100/ Tel. (680) 2485720/ srigopalccd@yahoo.co.in
Chamorshi, Maharashtra — 78, Krishna Nagar, Dist. Gadchiroli, Chamorshi 264 403/ Tel. 09423422914
Chandigarh, Punjab — Hare Krishna Dham, Sector 36-B, 160 036/ Tel. (172) 260-1590 or 260-3232/ iskcon.chandigarh@pamho.net
Chennai — Hare Krishna Land, off ECR, Akkarai, Sholinganallur, Chennai 600 119/ Tel. (44) 24530921 or 24530923/ iskconchennai@gmail.com
Coimbatore, TN — Jagannath Mandir, Hare Krishna Land, Aerodrome P.O., Opp. CIT, 641 014/ Tel. (422) 2574508, 2574812, or 2574813/ info@iskcon-coimbatore.org
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Gadei Giri, Odisha — Post Alabol via Balikuda, Dist. Jagatsinghpur, 754 108/ Tel. (6724) 238112/ srigopalccd@yahoo.co.in
Ghaziabad, UP — Hare Krishna Marg, R-11/35, Raj Nagar, 201 002/ Tel. 9312438001 or 9312438000/ Fax: (120) 2824200/ iskcon.ghaziabad@pamho.net
Guntur, AP — Opp. Sivalayam, Peda Kakani 522 509
Guwahati, Assam — Ulubari Chariali, South Sarania, 781 007/ Tel. (361) 2525963/ iskcon.guwahati@pamho.net
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Hyderabad, AP — Hare Krishna Land, Nampally Station Rd., 500 001/ Tel. 8106130279 or (40) 24744969/ iskcon.hyderabad@pamho.net (Guesthouse: guesthouse.iskconhyd@pamho.net)
Imphal, Manipur — Hare Krishna Land, Airport Rd., 795 001/ Tel. (385) 2455693/ manimandir@sancharnet.in
Indore, MP — ISKCON, Nipania, Indore/ Tel. 9300474043/ mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net
Jaipur, Rajasthan — ISKCON Rd., Opp. Vijay Path, Mansarovar, Jaipur 302 020 (mail: ISKCON, 84/230, Sant Namdev Marg, Opp. K.V. No. 5, Mansarovar, Jaipur 302 020)/ Tel. (141) 2782765 or 2781860/ jaipur@pamho.net
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Madurai, TN — 37 Maninagaram Main Rd., 625 001/ Tel. (452) 274-6472
Mangalore, Karnataka — ISKCON Sri Jagannath Mandir, near Hotel Woodlands, Bunts Hotel Rd., 575 003/ Tel. (824) 2423326 or 2442756, or 9844325616
◆ **Mayapur, WB —** ISKCON, Shree Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir, Shree Mayapur Dham, Dist. Nadia, 741 313/ Tel. (3472) 245620, 245240, or 245355/ Fax: (3472) 245238/ mayapur.chandrodaya@pamho.net
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◆ **Mumbai, Maharashtra —** Hare Krishna Land, Juhu 400 049/ Tel. (22) 26206860/ Fax: (22) 26205214/ info@iskconmumbai.com; guest.house.bombay@pamho.net
◆ **Mumbai, Maharashtra —** 7 K. M. Munshi Marg, Chowpatty 400 007/ Tel. (22) 23665500/ Fax: (22) 23665555/ info@radhagopinath.com
Mumbai, Maharashtra — Shristhi Complex, Mira Rd. (E), opposite Royal College, Dist. Thane, 401 107/ Tel. (22) 2811-7795 or -7796/ Fax: (22) 2811-8875/ jagjivan.gkg@pamho.net
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New Delhi, UP — 41/77, Punjabi Bagh (West), 110 026/ Tel. (11) 25222851 or 25227478
Noida, UP — A-5, Sector-33, 201 301 (Opposite NTPC office)/ Tel. (120) 2506211
Pandharpur, Maharashtra — Hare Krishna Dhama, East Bank of Chandrabhaga River, Pandharpur, Dist. Solapur, 413 304/ Tel. (2186) 267242 or 267266, or 9423335991/ iskcon.pandharpur@pamho.net
Patna, Bihar — Sri Sri Banke Bihariji Mandir, Golok Dham, Budha Marg, Patna-1/ Tel. (612) 2220794, 2687637, or 2685081; or 9431021881/ Fax: (612) 2205929/ krishna.kripa.jps@pamho.net
Pune, Maharashtra — 4 Tarapoor Rd., Camp, 411 001/ Tel. (20) 41033222 or 41033223/ nvcc@iskconpune.in
Puri, Odisha — Bhakti Kuti, Swargadwar, 752 001/ Tel. (6752) 231440
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Rajkot, Gujarat — Sri Sri Radha Neelmadhav Dham, Kalawad Rd., Opposite Kankot Patiya, Mota Mava, 360 005/ Tel. 9898550185/ vaishnavseva@yahoo.co.in
Ranaghat, WB — Gourdham, Habibpur, Ranaghat, Dist. Nadia, 741 403/ Tel. (3473) 281150 or 281226/ shyamrup.jps@pamho.net
Salem, TN — ISKCON, Hare Krishna Land, Karuppur 636 012/ Tel. (427) 2001686/ iskcon.salem@pamho.net
Secunderabad, AP — 27 St. John's Rd., 500 026/ Tel. (40) 780-5232/ Fax: (40) 814021
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◆ **Tirupati, AP —** K.T. Rd., Vinayaka Nagar, 517 507/ Tel. (877) 2231760 or 2230009/ revati.raman.jps@pamho.net (Guesthouse: guesthouse.tirupati@pamho.net)
Udhampur, J&K — Srila Prabhupada Ashram, Srila Prabhupada Marg, Srila Prabhupada Nagar, 182 101/ Tel. (1992) 270298/ info@iskconudhampur.com
Ujjain, MP — 35–37 Hare Krishna Land, Bharatpuri, 456 010/ Tel. (734) 2535000 or 2531000, or 9300969016/ Fax: (734) 2536000/ iskcon.ujjain@pamho.net
Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat — Opp. B&B Polytechnic, Mota Bazaar, Ananda, 388 120/ Tel. (2692) 230796 or 233012/ iskcon.vvnagar@pamho.net
Varanasi, UP — ISKCON, B 27/80 Durgakund Rd., Near Durgakund Police Station, Varanasi 221 010/ Tel. (542) 246422 or 222617
Vellore, TN — Chennai Ext. Centre, 10–12, 10th East Cross Road, Gandhi Nagar, 632 006
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Visakhapatnam, AP — Hare Krishna Land, Sagaranagar-45 (City office and mail: Plot No. 52, Pandurangapuram, Beach Rd., Visakhapatnam 530 043)/ Tel. (891)2528376 or 6537625/ samba.jps@pamho.net (Guesthouse: guesthouse.vizag@pamho.net)
◆ **Vrindavan, UP —** Krishna-Balaram Mandir, Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg, Raman Reti, Dist. Mathura, 281 124/ Tel. & Fax: (565) 2540728/ iskcon.vrindavan@pamho.net; (Guesthouse: Tel. (565) 2540022; ramamani@sancharnet.in)
Warangal, AP — Mulugu Rd., Ayappa Pidipally, 506 007/ Tel. (8712) 426182
Yamunanagar, Haryana — ISKCON Hare Krishna Dham, Hare Krishna Marg, Raghunathpuri, Yamunanagar 135001/ Tel. (1732) 321001 or (mobile) 09355330775/ vishu_bakshi05@yahoo.co.in

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Assam — Karnamadhu, Dist. Karimganj
Chamorshi, Maharashtra — 78 Krishnanagar Dham, Dist. Gadhachiroli, 442 603/ Tel. (218) 623473
Hyderabad, AP (New Naimisaranya Farm) — P.O. Dabilpur Village, Medchal Tq., Dist. R.R., 501 401/ Tel. (40) 65520070 or 9440057263/ naimisaranya@pamho.net
Indore, MP (Krishna-Balarama Mandir) — Hare Krishna Vihar, Nipania Village/ Tel. (731) 572794
Mayapur, WB — (contact ISKCON Mayapur)

Many temples have their own websites, which you can find at our online directory: http://directory.krishna.com. Telephone numbers include country codes, identified by a +. To save space, we've skipped the codes for North America (1) and India (91). For information on international calling, go to www.howtocallabroad.com. ◆ Temples with restaurants or dining

CENTERS AROUND THE WORLD

Puri, Odisha — ISKCON, Bhaktivedanta Ashram, Sipasirubuli, 752 001/ Tel. (6752) 230494
Surat, Gujarat — Bhaktivedanta Rajavidyalaya, Krishnalok, Surat-Bardoli Rd. Gangapur, P. O. Gangadhara, Dist. Surat, 394 310/ Tel. (2622) 63546
Vrindavan, UP — Vrinda Kund, Nandagaon, Dist. Mathura

ADDITIONAL RESTAURANTS

Kolkata, WB — Govinda's, ISKCON House, 22 Gurusaday Rd., 700 019/ Tel. (33) 24866922 or 24866009
Surat, Gujarat — Ashram Rd., Jahangirpura 395005/ Tel. (261) 2765891 or 2765516/ surat@pamho.net

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Calgary, Alberta — 313 Fourth St. N.E., T2E 3S3/ Tel. (403) 265-3302/ Fax: (403) 547-0795/ vamanstones@shaw.ca
Edmonton, Alberta — 9353 35th Ave. NW, T6E 5R5/ Tel. (780) 439-9999/ harekrishna.edmonton@gmail.com
Montreal, Quebec — 1626 Pie IX Blvd., H1V 2C5/ Tel. & fax: (514) 521-1301/ iskconmontreal@gmail.com
◆ **Ottawa, Ontario** — 212 Somerset St. E., K1N 6V4/ Tel. (613) 565-6544/ Fax: (613) 565-2575/ iskconottawa@sympatico.ca
Regina, Saskatchewan — 1279 Retallack St., S4T 2H8/ Tel. (306) 525-0002 or -6461/ jagadishadas@yahoo.com
Toronto, Ontario — 243 Avenue Rd., M5R 2J6/ Tel. (416) 922-5415/ Fax: (416) 922-1021/ toronto@pamho.net
Vancouver, B.C. — 5462 S.E. Marine Dr., Burnaby V5J 3G8/ Tel. (604) 433-9728/ Fax: (604) 648-8715; Govinda's Bookstore & Cafe: (604) 433-7100 or (888) 433-8722/ akrura@krishna.com

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Berkeley, California — 2334 Stuart St., 94705/ Tel. (510) 649-8619/ Fax: (510) 665-9366
Boise, Idaho — 1615 Martha St., 83706/ Tel. (208) 344-4274/ boise_temple@yahoo.com
Boston, Massachusetts — 72 Commonwealth Ave., 02116/ Tel. (617) 247-8611/ Fax: (617) 909-5181/ darukrishna@iskconboston.org
Chicago, Illinois — 1716 W. Lunt Ave., 60626/ Tel. (773) 973-0900/ Fax: (773) 973-0526/ chicagoiskcon@yahoo.com
Columbus, Ohio — 379 W. Eighth Ave., 43201/ Tel. (614) 421-1661/ premvilasdas.rns@gmail.com
◆ **Dallas, Texas** — 5430 Gurley Ave., 75223/ Tel. (214) 827-6330/ Fax: (214) 823-7264/ txkrishnas@aol.com; restaurant: vegetariantaste@aol.com
◆ **Denver, Colorado** — 1400 Cherry St., 80220/ Tel. (303) 333-5461/ Fax: (303) 321-9052
Detroit, Michigan — 383 Lenox Ave., 48215/ Tel. (313) 824-6000/ gaurangi108@hotmail.com
Gainesville, Florida — 214 N.W. 14th St., 32603/ Tel. (352) 336-4183/ Fax: (352) 379-2927/ kalakantha.acbsp@pamho.net
Hartford, Connecticut — 1683 Main St., E. Hartford, 06108/ Tel. & fax: (860) 289-7252/ pyari108@gmail.com
◆ **Honolulu, Hawaii** — 51 Coelho Way, 96817/ Tel. (808) 595-4913/ rama108@bigfoot.com
Houston, Texas — 1320 W. 34th St., 77018/ Tel. (713) 686-4482/ Fax: (713) 956-9968/ management@iskconhouston.org
Kansas City, Missouri — 5201 Paseo Blvd., 64110/ Tel. (816) 924-5619/ Fax: (816) 924-5640/ rvc@rvc.edu
Laguna Beach, California — 285 Legion St., 92651/ Tel. (949) 494-7029/ info@lagunatemple.com
Las Vegas, Nevada — Govinda's Center of Vedic India, 7181 Dean Martin Dr., 89118/ Tel. (702) 434-8332/ info@govindascenter.com
◆ **Los Angeles, California** — 3764 Watseka Ave., 90034/ Tel. (310) 836-2676/ Fax: (310) 839-2715/ membership@harekrishnala.com
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◆ **New York, New York** — The Bhakti Center, 25 First Ave., 10003/ Tel. (212) 253-6182
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Seattle, Washington — 1420 228th Ave. S.E., Sammamish, 98075/ Tel. (425) 246-8436/ Fax: (425) 868-8928/ info@vedicculturalcenter.org
◆ **Spanish Fork, Utah** — Krishna Temple Project & KHQN Radio, 8628 S. State Rd., 84660/ Tel. (801) 798-3559/ Fax: (801) 798-9121/ utahkrishnas@gmail.com
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Carriere, Mississippi (New Talavan) — 31492 Anner Rd., 39426/ Tel. (601) 749-9460 or 799-1354/ Fax: (601) 799-2924/ talavan@hughes.net
Gurabo, Puerto Rico (New Govardhana Hill) — Carr. 181, Km. 16.3, Bo. Santa Rita, Gurabo (mail: HC-01, Box 8440, Gurabo, PR 00778)/ Tel. (787) 367-3530 or (787) 737-1722/ manonatha@gmail.com
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◆ **Moundsville, West Virginia (New Vrindaban)** — R.D. No. 1, Box 319, Hare Krishna Ridge, 26041/ Tel. (304) 843-1600; Guest House, (304) 845-5905/ Fax: (304) 845-0023/ mail@newvrindaban.com
Mulberry, Tennessee (Murari-sevaka) — 532 Murari Ln., 37359 (mail: P.O. Box 108, Lynchburg, TN 37352)/ Tel. & fax: (931) 759-6888/ murari_sevaka@yahoo.com
Port Royal, Pennsylvania (Gita Nagari) — 534 Gita Nagari Rd., 17082/ Tel. (717) 527-4101/ dhruva.bts@pamho.net
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Hato Rey, Puerto Rico — Tamal Krishna's Veggie Garden, 131 Eleanor Roosevelt, 00918/ Tel. (787) 754-6959/ Fax: (787) 756-7769/ tkveggiegarden@aol.com

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Birmingham, England — 84 Stanmore Rd., Edgbaston B16 9TB/ Tel. +44 (121) 420 4999/ birmingham@iskcon.org.uk
Cardiff, Wales — The Soul Centre, 116 Cowbridge Rd., East Canton CF11 9DX/ Tel. +44 (29) 2039 0391/ the.soul.centre@pamho.net
Coventry, England — Kingfield Rd., Coventry (mail: 19 Gloucester St., Coventry CV1 3BZ)/ Tel. +44 (24) 7655 2822 or 5420/ haridas.kds@pamho.net
◆ **Dublin, Ireland** — 83 Middle Abbey St., Dublin 1/ Tel. +353 (1) 661 5095/ dublin@krishna.ie; Govinda's: info@govindas.ie
Leicester, England — 21 Thoresby St., North Evington, LE5 4GU/ Tel. +44 (116) 276 2587/ pradyumna.jas@pamho.net
Lesmahagow, Scotland — Karuna Bhavan, Bankhouse Rd., Lesmahagow, Lanarkshire, ML11 0ES/ Tel. +44 (1555) 894790/ Fax: +44 (1555) 894526/ karunabhavan@aol.com
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London, England (Kings Cross) — 102 Caledonian Rd., Kings Cross, Islington, N1 9DN/ Tel. +44 (20) 7168 5732/ foodforalluk@aol.com
Manchester, England — 20 Mayfield Rd., Whalley Range, M16 8FT/ Tel. +44 (161) 226 4416/ contact@iskconmanchester.com
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Dublin, Ireland — Govinda's, 18 Merrion Row, Dublin 2/ Tel. +353 (1) 661 5095/ praghosa.sdg@pamho.net

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FROM THE EDITOR

Seasonal Changes

I'VE HEARD PEOPLE SAY they wouldn't want to live in Florida because they'd miss having four seasons. I live in north Florida, and we have four seasons here, just none with snow. It's midsummer here now, with nature's greenery on full display. Autumn delivers a hint of the spectacular foliage of the northern climes where I grew up. In winter many trees go bald. My favorite season is spring, when new flowers and foliage put on their show. Besides, spring reminds me of a revelation of Kṛṣṇa's in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.35): "Of seasons I am flower-bearing spring."

I seem to be more aware of the changing seasons than I used to be. When I noticed that about myself recently, I wondered, "How aware am I of my own changing seasons?"

I'm in the autumn of my life, with dead, cold winter approaching too quickly. I don't like to think about growing old and dying, but Kṛṣṇa says that reflecting on them is the intelligent thing to do. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (13.9), among the list of items He declares to be knowledge, one is *janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhi-duḥkha-doṣānudarśanam:* "the perception of the evil [*duḥkha:* distress; *doṣa:* fault] of birth, death, old age, and disease."

The prefix *anu* in the Sankrit word Prabhupāda translates as "perception" (*anudarśanam*) suggests we should perceive these "evils" under the guidance of self-realized spiritual authorities. Śrīla Prabhupāda, my primary spiritual authority, generally referred to these four as "the miseries of material existence." You might think you can solve all your problems by material means, he would say, but don't be foolish enough to believe that material solutions will ever eliminate disease, old age, death, and rebirth.

Such pessimism about material existence doesn't mean hopelessness, though. Hope lies in spiritual life. Acknowledging the inevitability of suffering is an important impetus for spiritual life, where the real solutions lie.

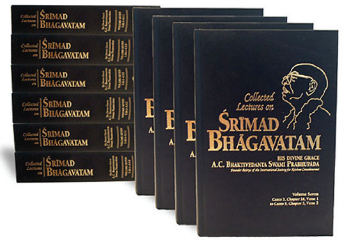
We souls have a choice. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (1.3.14) tells us, "O living entity, you are sleeping in this material world. Please get up and take advantage of your human form of life." We can snooze and suffer the miseries of birth, old age, disease, and death, or we can wake up to our real life of loving service to Kṛṣṇa, a life of full knowledge and happiness.

We are now "conditioned souls," the phrase Prabhupāda uses for souls controlled by the conditions the material energy imposes upon us. Souls free from material influence are known as liberated souls, and the practice of *bhakti-yoga* can place us in their ranks.

We conditioned souls get used to our situation under the material energy and think of suffering as normal. But it's not normal for us in our real, or liberated, life. It's only part of our dream life in material existence, and we have little or no understanding of what a liberated life would be like.

In Vermont, where I grew up, people get used to the long, frigid winters. But I remember eagerly awaiting spring, when I could finally shed layers of clothing and heavy snow boots. The feeling of running in tennis shoes on pavement damp with melting snow may have been a hint of real liberation in Kṛṣṇa's abode, where His devotees are always dancing, and the weather's always perfect. —*Nāgarāja Dāsa*

Śrīla Prabhupāda



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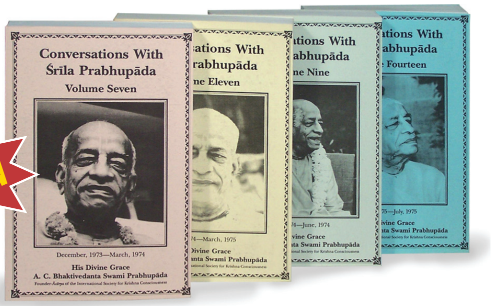

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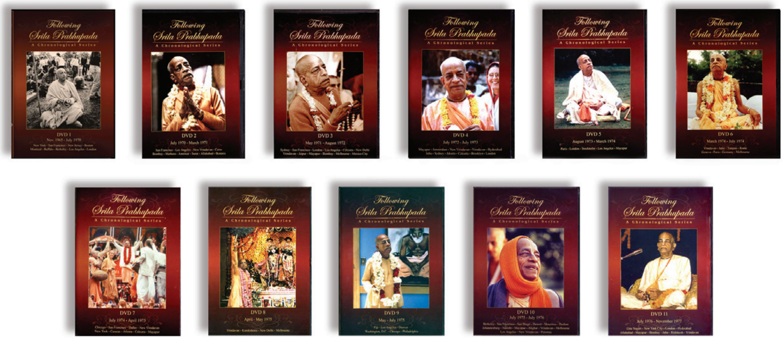

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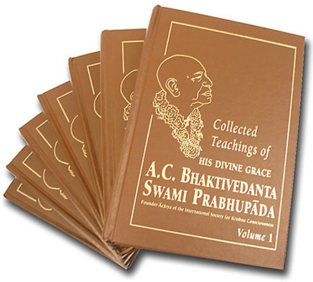

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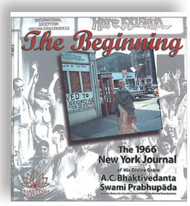

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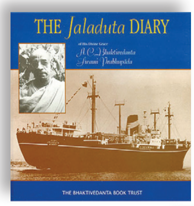

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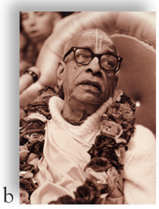
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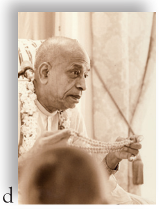
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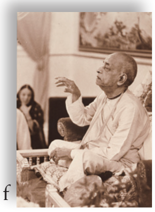
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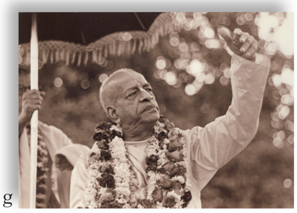
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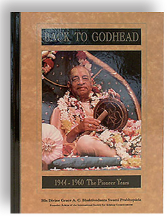

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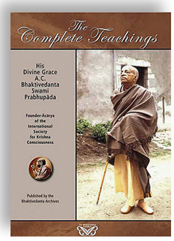

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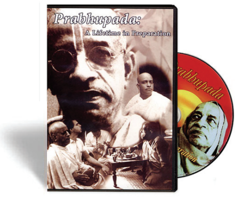

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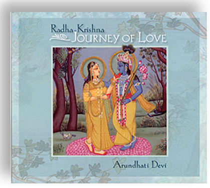
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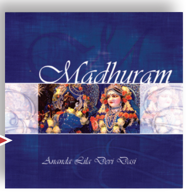
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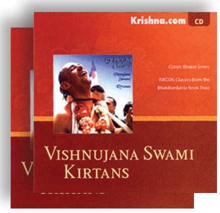
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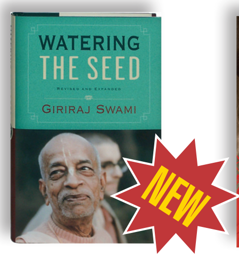
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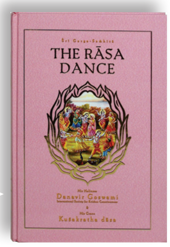
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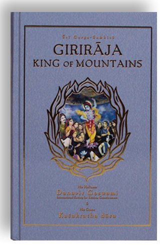
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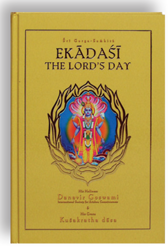
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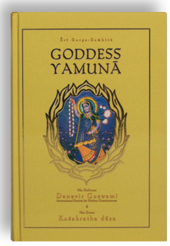
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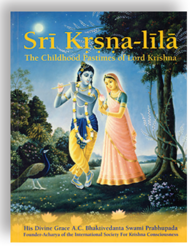
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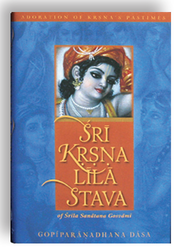
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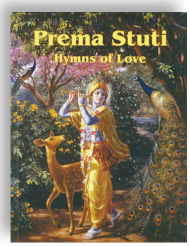
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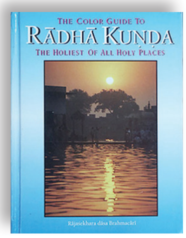

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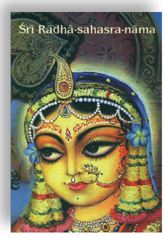

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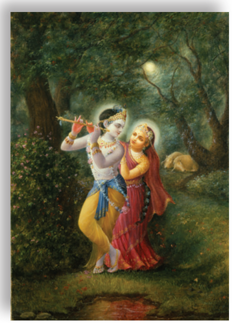

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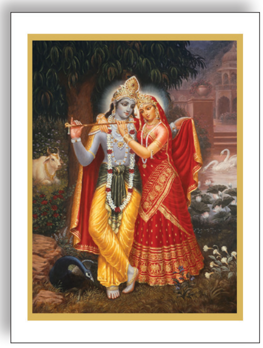

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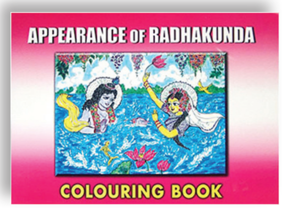
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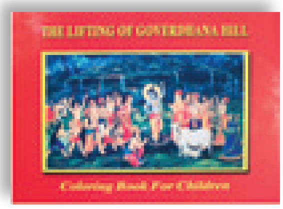
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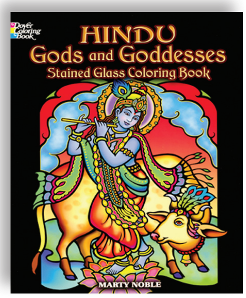
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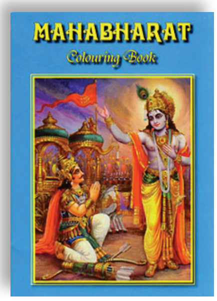
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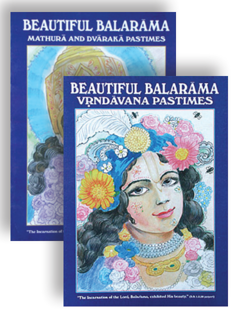
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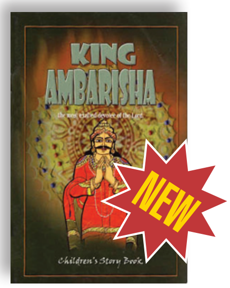
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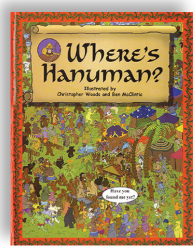
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His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.8.27, Purport

The whole cosmic order is under Me. Under My will it is automatically manifested again and again, and under My will it is annihilated at the end.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Bhagavad-gītā 9.8

Originally, Kṛṣṇa's energy is spiritual, and the energy known as the living entity is also spiritual. However, there is another energy, called illusion, which consists of fruitive activity. That is the Lord's third potency.

Viṣṇu Purāṇa 6.7.61

In the material condition, the living entity is sometimes raised to higher planetary systems and material prosperity and sometimes drowned in a hellish situation. His state is exactly like that of a criminal whom a king punishes by submerging him in water and then raising him again from the water.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 20.118

The Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* reveals the tenth object, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the shelter of all surrendered souls. He is known as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and He is the ultimate source of all the universes. Let me offer my obeisances unto Him.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī
Commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.1.1

You should know Kṛṣṇa to be the original soul of all living entities. For the benefit of the whole universe, He has, out of His causeless mercy, appeared as an ordinary human being. He has done this by the strength of His own internal potency.

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.14.55

Pure devotional service brings immediate relief from all kinds of material distress. It is the beginning of all auspiciousness. It minimizes the value of liberation. It is rarely achieved, it automatically puts one in transcendental pleasure, and it is the only means to attract Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī
Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.17

RĀMĀYAṆA

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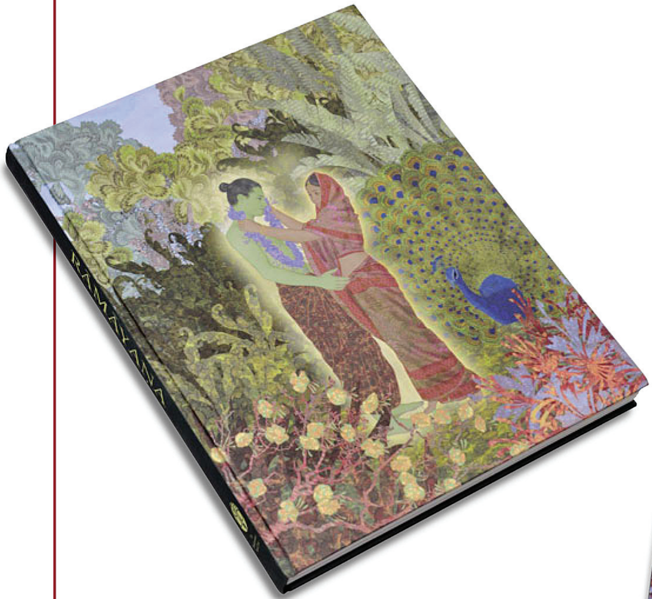

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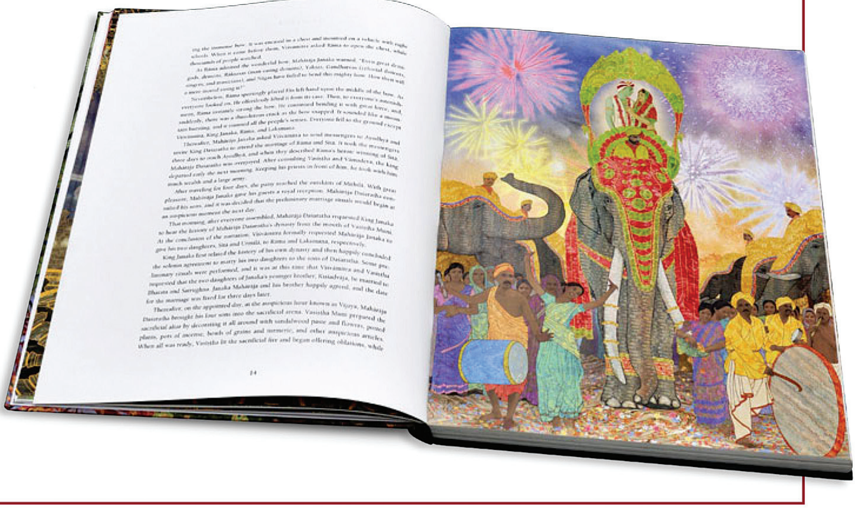

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